

# TEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

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## APPROACHES TO CHRIST

FROM THE 'FULFILMENT-VIEW' TO THE 'SACRAMENTAL APPROACH'

*J. X. Irudayaraj*

AN INDIAN CHRISTOLOGY: A DISCUSSION OF METHOD

*Samuel Royan*

ANUBHAVA AS PRAMANA OF AN INDIAN CHRISTOLOGY

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ANUBHAVA VIA SAKSATKARA TO MUKTI

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—A Journal of Christian Interpretation—

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The Manager, Jeevadhara, Theology Centre, Alleppey.
4. Inland subscriptions are best sent by M. O.
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## Subscription Rates:-

Indian : Rs. 12/- (Malayalam Edition)  
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Foreign: \$ 6/- (U. S. A.)  
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# The Living Christ

## APPROACHES TO CHRIST

Editor:

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*A Journal of Christian Interpretation*

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# Editorial

ONE of the pressing concerns which *Jeevadhara* shares with many thinking men in our country, and perhaps abroad too, is about the need to help emerge a body of theological thought that will be truly indian in inspiration, approach, tone and resonance. Cardinal Gracias in a recent letter to the chief editor, writes: "It strikes me that an excellent line is being explored by your editorials and writers in so much as this review will be the occasion and opportunity for research which is absolutely necessary in India".

An indian theology will, in large measure, have to evolve and mature in its own time and its own way. But it also calls for a deal of active shaping on our part, and for the creation of circumstances conducive to its birth and growth. In this respect there are three things *Jeevadhara* has to do. The first is to invite and urge indians earnestly to enter every field of theological thinking, researching and writing. The purpose is to promote among us the habit of serious christian reflection, some theological self-confidence and a keener interest in the interpretation of life and faith in relation to each other. Our second duty is to have things indian, both old and new, studied and discussed in depth from a theological point of view. It is here that a theology specifically indian will begin to shape. In the third place *Jeevadhara* should work towards the elaboration and definition of a theological view point, or approach or method, of our own. This is indispensable to ensure that the quality of our work is specifically theological and indian.



The present number of the periodical is a contribution in this third area of service. Obviously we do not have here an exhaustive treatment of theological or christological methodology or the final word on it. The articles are only meant to initiate a fresh discussion of this important subject.

Irudayaraj's article presenting Christ and his Church as sacraments of God and of religions, underlines a theological method which is bound to prove rich and fruitful for christian reflection in a land of religious pluralism, in a time that is taking afresh to the study of images, signs and interpretations.

Samuel Rayan touches upon certain aspects of methodology for the evolving of an indian christology, with particular emphasis on the existential approach and on India's concrete expectations and experience of life today. The discussion on method for an indian christology is continued in T. M. Manickam's essay, but the approach is different and the thesis, thought-provoking. It is a plea for the use of religious experience as a basic principle of theological and christological reflection. Mrs. Sobharani Basu's illuminating note places religious experience in the perspective of knowledge on the one hand and liberation on the other, and justifies the use of experience as a basic theological principle. An objective description of one such experience is given in Chacko Valiaveetil's study of God's quest of man in *Saiva Siddhanta*. Experiences of the kind are material and a starting-point for the elaboration of theological method.

The last contribution in this issue is a bulletin which seeks, in the author's own words, "to let us feel the pulse of the christological situation of the



last decade." Here we are given the kernel of the christological thought of some seventeen thinkers, with attention to the special approach of each writer to the christological problem.

It is hoped that this venture will be the first trickle of a steady stream of reflection in our country on the problems of methodology for an Indian theology.

Lumen,  
Cochin-16.

Samuel Rayan

# From the 'Fulfilment-View' to the 'Sacramental Approach'

## 1. The Problem

IN our relation to non-Christian religions, particularly to Hinduism in India, we have made a progressive journey from the 'conquest-mission' to the 'adaptation-method' and from there to the 'fulfilment-view'; after Vatican II we have made an exodus from the 'fulfilment-view' to the 'dialogue-approach', with the conviction that the Church is the 'universal sacrament of salvation'.

In the days of colonial imperialism foreign missionaries were urged by their zeal to baptize the pagans whom they considered to be doomed to hell; to them non-Christian religions appeared to be nothing but idolatry and superstition. The missionaries were, therefore, bent upon baptizing the pagans at all costs, in order to save them from 'devilish' practices and from hell.

When the conquerors and the conquered accepted a peaceful co-existence, missionaries got an opportunity to learn about the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples; they were able to understand the peoples' particular mental make-up and psychological traits. Hence the charity of the missionaries impelled them to adapt their lives to native customs and manners in order to win the people for Christ. Such an adaptation, however, was not so much an expression of the incarnation of the local Church as a pedagogy for proselytizing.

Time elapsed; the indigenous Christians began to feel that Christ had come to them not to abolish but to fulfil their own traditions and endowments. Consequently they were conscious of their vocation to greater perfection. But their deeper aspirations left them unsatisfied with the 'fulfilment-view' alone since it did not show its relevance to the existing plurality of faiths especially in the case of genuine non-Christian communities. They set out, therefore, on a search for a profound insight into God's design for religions. This was granted to them by Vatican II which gave concrete utterance to the groanings of the Spirit in non-Christian religions.

Thus, in the history of evangelisation, there was first the 'conquest-mission' which aimed at 'baptismal enrolment' and 'mass-conversion', then the 'adaptation-methods' solicited group-conversion and social acceptance. The 'fulfilment-view' promised to make the holy Hindu holier. The 'sacramental approach' calls for an ecumenical dialogue with all men of good-will, because of the rediscovery that the Church is not the monopoly of divine life; "she serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society" (*Gaudium et Spes*, Art. 40.)

Unfortunately even after Vatican II, many of us, for all practical purposes, cling to the 'fulfilment-view' alone, and take to dialogue-meetings where we find ourselves misfits. It is like 'pouring new wine into used wineskins'. For, the apologetic consciousness inherent in the 'fulfilment-view' cannot help us accept the dialogue-partner as he is. It is only the 'sacramental approach' that can initiate us into a genuine dialogue since it believes in mutual sharing and enrichment. We would therefore like to point



out the need for our transit from the 'fulfilment-view' to the 'sacramental approach' in order to respond fruitfully to our dialogical situation.

## 2. The 'Sacramental Approach'

Here are two significant central affirmations of Vatican II. "The Church is in Christ the sacrament or sacramental sign of intimate union with God and of unity for the whole human race" (*Lumen Gentium*, art. 1). "Through the Spirit he has established his body which is the Church, as the universal sacrament of salvation." (Ibid 48; also *Ad Gentes*, arts 2-3; *Gaudium et Spes*, art 45). Thus the idea of the Church as a sacrament, in the Council documents, takes on its full meaning within the trinitarian perspective in which God's plan is revealed.

As the "sacrament of sacraments" (Pseudo-Dionysius, see PG. 111, 424C) the Church is the sacrament of Jesus Christ, just as Jesus Christ Himself in His humanity is the sacrament of God; according to the words of Augustine: "There is only one sacrament of God, and that is Christ." So, to define the Church as a sacrament is to see it in the context of the mystery of Jesus Christ, and this implies the idea of the fullness of Christ and of fellowship. In dependence on Christ in whom is given the fullness of revelation (Col. 2:9), the Church is the fullness of Christ. It is "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:23) This idea of fullness has an essentially eschatological value and is linked with the theme of the spouse sharing the life of her husband. In this way the Church is defined as an extension to the human race of the life of the Trinity through the mystery of

Incarnation, or again, as fellowship in the Holy Spirit (L. G. art. 8)

Here, we have to make a small note to clarify our basic terms: *sacrament* and *sacramental*. Obviously we do not merely refer to the classical seven sacraments as opposed to the various sacramentals of the Church, a distinction we find in the old theological manuals. We call the incarnational economy of salvation 'sacramental' since Christ is the Primordial Sacrament of the Father, and the Church is His fundamental sacrament. And by 'sacramental approach' we understand that the Church's presence is the guarantee of God's salvific will operative everywhere in the world, as Christ's presence was the sure sign of the Father's irrevocable commitment to the whole world.

Now since Christ is the only Mediator (1 Tim 2:5) and Christ's mediation is basically sacramental (L. G. arts 3 & 4) every offer of salvation is sacramental. Hence Christ's eschatological grace ought to be present also sacramentally in non-Christian religions; though in diverse manners of visibility, Christ's salvific presence is basically sacramental in every faith and religion. It is obvious, then, that Hinduism too mediates the sacramental mystery of Christ.

But, of course, there is a difference of sacramentality in Hinduism and Christianity, not only of degree, i. e., quantitative, but of kind as well, i. e., qualitative. If this is so, one is tempted to ask what the difference is between the sacramental approach and the fulfilment-view. For, it would seem that Christ's sacramental presence in Christianity is full while in the Hindu faith it is only partial. But this way of understanding the 'difference of sacramentality'

existing between faiths is to miss the very idea of 'sacramental economy'. Our interest is precisely to point out how the 'sacramental approach' looks at the difference more realistically in ecumenical perspectives than the previous views which seem to oversimplify the function of non-Christian religions in the present incarnational economy of salvation.

In the 'sacramental approach' the difference between the Christian and Hindu faith is viewed in terms of *relation* and not of *comparison*. For, the 'sacramental structure' itself is primarily relational. Hence the difference between the sacramental presence of Christ in Christianity and in Hinduism is a matter of their *specific relatedness*.

What exactly is this specific relatedness? We can, in simple terms, say that the relationship of Hinduism to Christianity is not the same as Christianity's relationship to Hinduism. Just as a mother's relationship to her child is not the same as the child's to the mother. What we mean is that in the matter of 'relational reality' we cannot call the difference 'partial' and 'full' since the relationships by their nature are mutual and inclusive and hence always 'whole'. Let us try to make these terms of the 'sacramental view' more concrete by contrasting them with those of the 'fulfilment-view'.

### 3. The Difference and the Relevance

The first and the most basic difference between the two views lies in their way of relating Hinduism and Christianity. While the 'fulfilment-view' affirms a *unilateral* relationship of Hinduism to Christianity, the 'sacramental approach' fosters a *bilateral* relationship between them. The former says that it is



Hinduism that has to receive everything from the Church, as the Church alone possesses eschatological perfection. The latter, however, believes that it is the Risen Christ who is the Eschatological Lord of both Christianity and Hinduism; so, Christianity also ought to be enriched by other faiths. Hence, positing a bilateral relationship does not at all jeopardize the uniqueness of Christianity; on the contrary its inclusive character is highlighted, since an exclusive uniqueness would be arbitrary and sterile and therefore undivine.

It seems, then, that the unilateral relation of the 'fulfilment-view' is posited owing to an exaggerated emphasis on the *supernatural* and *gratuitous* character of the Christian faith; whereas the 'sacramental approach' attempts to realize concretely the 'incarnation-covenant' relationship; for the covenant relationship, begun with Israel and sealed in Christ, is fully mutual: 'I will be his God and he will be my son' (Rev. 21:7). Therefore the 'sacramental approach' inspired by the covenant relationship of the God of Biblical revelation, rejects every trace of 'onesided' relationship which the scholastic philosophy tried to establish between *Ens A Se* and *ens ab alio*. Thus the mutual openness envisaged by the dialogue-approach between Hinduism and Christianity explains better the pluralism in which grace reveals itself. (Grace is operative in analogous situations and not in univocal modes.)

Let us now illustrate this point of 'mutuality' proposed by the 'sacramental approach'. Take for example the love between a boy and a girl before marriage and in marriage. The reality of their love can be the same both before and in marriage. And

yet this love assumes a definitive expression in marriage. So, too, the presence of Christ both in Hinduism and Christianity is sacramental; but there is a difference in the sacramentality itself. And the difference of sacramentality consists in the difference of their specific *relatedness* to each other. If we apply the example just given, the sacramentality in Hinduism is like the love before marriage which is still ambivalent and which calls for marriage to seal it, whereas the sacramentality in Christianity is like marriage which needs to be constantly imbued with the love which prompted marriage in order to become fruitful. There is thus a dynamic relationship between the two; one cannot exist except in *openness* to the other. However, their very openness is marked by specific difference. The openness of the Christian faith to the Hindu faith could be termed *fundamentally sacramental* and the openness of the Hindu faith to the Christian faith, *functionally sacramental*. The functional presence is rooted in the fundamental presence and the fundamental builds itself on the functional. The one is the vine and the other is the branch. There is a *vital relationship* here, and in every vital relationship there is no comparison such as higher or lower, rather one of sharing and growing as in love and friendship.

Secondly, the basic difference between the 'fulfilment' and 'sacramental' views lies in the way each looks at the content of the Hindu and Christian faiths respectively. The former comparing the content of both the faiths judges that the Hindu faith is less perfect than the Christian though a Hindu can be holier than a Christian. The Hindu faith is considered objectively partial; the 'fulfilment-view' views holy Hindus subjectively as anonymous

Christians since they are not explicitly aware of the implicit Christian content of their faith. Thus both objectively and subjectively, according to this view, the Hindu faith remains 'unfulfilled'.

The 'sacramental approach', however, looks at the content of faith quite differently. It does not compare the content of the different faiths; it relates the specific faith to its own specific revelation, just because faith and revelation mutually interpenetrate. Hence, the faith of the Hindu has to be related to the revelation he has accepted; the Hindu and Christian faiths cannot therefore be immediately compared, except through the medium of the revelation each of them has received. For, faith is basically a personal response to the revealing God; faith becomes partial or full only in relation to the revelation to which one commits oneself. From this point of view the Christian faith is primarily committed to the historical person of the Biblical revelation whereas the Hindu faith is dedicated to the mystery of Christ, the pneumatic Christ (not merely as Logos but as the Risen Lord of the Universe) operative beyond the official borders of Christianity. Thus each faith has its own sacramentality. What is essential is not *uniformity* of revelation and faith but *unity* of revelation and faith in spite of diverse religions.

Therefore the present approach avoids the unhappy comparative terms unsuited to dialogue such as the 'unknown Christ of World Religions', the 'anonymous Christian', and even expressions like 'the hidden presence of Christ in Hinduism' etc. It looks at every genuine faith in terms of its own specific salvific value in the concrete milieu of the people; hence, it focuses our attention on the explicit and



positive sacramental character of non-Christian faith rather than on its implicit and hidden content of which people in their exercise of faith are unaware. We are then led more to concentrate on the existing genuine dynamism of faith rather than to point to its 'not-yet' fullness. Thus the new approach situates and relates other faiths in compenetrating layers of sacramental economy and cuts across any type of pigeon-holed compartmentalisation. Does not such a vision of 'sacramental compenetration' (or mutual openness) reflect the very 'mutual indwelling' (*circumincessio*) of the interpersonal life of God? Certainly the sacramental mystery is born of the inner life of the Triune God. (Cf. L. G. art. 4)

#### 4. Beyond the 'Fulfilment-View'

But still the initial difficulty might persist. Given the fact of the uniqueness of Christ's revelation and the objective fullness of the Christian faith, could the sacramental approach, or any new approach, lead us further than the fulfilment-vision?

The answer is that the question itself is to be rethought. For, the sacramental approach does not claim either to supersede or contradict the 'fulfilment-view' of evangelization; our comparing and contrasting the two approaches does not at all mean that they are opposed to each other, but is meant, rather, to bring out the difference characterized by each one's accent and emphasis. We may call the former the eschatological, and the latter the incarnational approach, each one stressing the two aspects of the same mystery with a different emphasis. The 'fulfilment-view' sees the Church more as an 'end' in her eschatological fullness and so emphasizes the

perfection of the Christian faith, while the sacramental one looks at the Church more as a 'means' in her incarnational weakness (kenosis) and so accents the fact that she has to be enriched and perfected till the return of the Lord at Parousia. The two approaches, then, could be considered as manifesting the basic tension between the eschatological and the incarnational mystery of the Church, which assumes a special articulation in one way or another as a response to the needs of situations arising in the history of the Church.

The 'fulfilment-view' emerged in an age of comparative study to safeguard the uniqueness of Christian revelation without yielding to syncretism and indifferentism. Today, however, we have outgrown that stage and have learnt to face the plurality of faiths and religions in their 'providential functionality'; and hence our shift to the sacramental approach is prompted by to-day's challenges of faith.

Such a shift in our approach towards religions is not to be seen as an isolated phenomenon in the Church, but to be viewed as part and parcel of the global transition in the Church, after Vatican II, from the 'otherworldly-ascetical-segregation' to the 'earthly-involved-commitment'. Certainly, today's transit in the Church closely resembles that of the apostolic gathering which was shifted to Jerusalem instead of being left to stand on the Mount of Olives and gaze intently into the sky as the Lord was lifted up.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we can once again indicate the various landmarks we have made in our mission of

evangelization. The history of the axiom 'Outside the Church, no salvation' itself clearly points out the many stages we have gone through. The colonial mission attached 'Roman' to 'the Church' in the axiom, so that even some 'Christians' were considered to be outside the ecclesial communion and hence had to be evangelized. The adaptation-movement, however, broadened the content of 'the Church' in the axiom by insisting on the 'Catholic' character of the Church, and so establishment of local churches gained significance in mission-lands. As mission-theology developed, it deepened the concept of the Church which offered no condemnation but purification and fulfilment to other religions. With Vatican II we are given a still fresher vision of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation, so that we can reverse the old axiom into 'outside salvation there is no Church'. For us, therefore, the original axiom expressed inadequately the ecclesial truth that the Church is for the world the efficacious sign of salvation. The dialogue-experience has further enlightened us to interpret the axiom more positively to mean that salvation is never realized in isolation and seclusion but always in fellowship and brotherhood.

Thus, the gradual widening and deepening of our understanding of the mystery of the Church has enabled us to overleap the fence, i.e., 'outside'. Today we do not see any 'outside' to the Church since the Church herself is inside the world and history, as leaven and salt.

If our approaches to evangelization are to prove relevant and fruitful, we have to keep on contemplating the mystery of the Church in her



concrete historical situations. As the pilgrim Church marches on, the Lord shows her fresh paths and newer visions. Only her creative fidelity to these ongoing revelations will keep her ever renewed and vigorous for the never-ending Revelation to come.

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Kurseong.

# An Indian Christology: a discussion of method

This paper is only a partial and preliminary contribution to a discussion (which must continue for some time) on the method to follow in trying to shape an indian christology. All it has to offer is questions, side-lights and hints, hopefully relevant to the problem of evolving an authentic indian body of thought and reflection on the person and work of Christ Jesus.

## 1. Yesterday or today?

The first question is whether the word 'indian' refers mainly to the past, and to ancient religious and cultural traditions including the sacred books which record our ancestors' spiritual experiences, or also, and in large measure, to life as experienced in the actual situation obtaining in the country today. Do we have in mind exclusively or mostly the India of the *R̥sis*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Darśanas*, or the India of the factories, the five-year plans and the atomic reactors? It is plain that attention should be paid both to the past and to the present, but it is equally clear that for a living christology, it is necessary that pride of place be accorded to the present. The past is significant in so far as it affects and qualifies the present, lives within it, and holds insights which are valid for all time but which today perhaps lie neglected and submerged.

In regard to the present too it could be asked whether we are here thinking of those who live and worship in the villages, farmlands and temples of a religiously and philosophically renaissance India, or also of those who are deeply engaged in the total revolution in progress which is rapidly renewing the face of the land and the soul of the nation. Once again the answer has, I think, to be inclusive, but the emphasis should lie with the ongoing revolution, for the influence of the revolution is fast penetrating into the villages and touching life and religion there into a ferment.

To pose the question from another angle: In evolving an indian christology shall we attend to the conventionally religious in India's past and present, or to the totality that is modern India with all the changes and influences that are at work within her? There has been in Hinduism today a new awakening and a return to the scriptures, which started with Ram Mohan Roy and Sri Rāmākrishna. There has been an attempt at reinterpretation and adaptation led by Vivekananda and S. Radhākṛṣṇan. India has been touched also by a revolutionary trend born of the impact of marxism and the material advance of certain marxist countries. There is then the subtle influence of a growing secularism. And there is finally the shock and the joy of encounter with western culture and with the christian faith. Should not all this constitute the background and the material of theological thinking and especially of christological reflection in India? And if the chief agony of our country and our times lies in the struggle of traditional religions with the demands made by the socio-economic situation and with the new outlook

on life created by science and technology, then we are under an obligation, laid on us by our faith in the Incarnation, to search for elements of christology in the totality of the live situation and the entire sphere of actual indian existence. The growing concern with the secular, and the expanding technology, no less than the religious revival, constitute a challenge which no indian theology, no theology at any rate of the Incarnation, can afford to overlook.

## 2. Christological lineaments

A clear look should now be taken at India's present with a view to discovering its possible christological implications. (a) The basic postulate, perhaps, of Hinduism in all its forms is the doctrine of *samsâra* (the birth-death cycle) so much so that it is possible to hold that Hinduism has been devised as an answer to man's longing for release from the cycle of *samsâra*. But the dread of *samsâra* is already ceasing to operate on the indian mind, and new longings concerned with the destiny and growth of the nation are beginning to hold sway over the souls of men. It is this new hope, this expectation of liberation from age-long poverty, disease and ignorance, that constitutes India's Messianism. Is it not in terms of this yearning that the Saviour will be best understood, presented and accepted? India is opening up to God's gift of him who comes to feed the hungry, heal the sick and impart the knowledge that is eternal and abundant life.

(b) In the New Testament the doctrine of the Person of Christ rose from a doctrine of the work



of Christ. It was a soteriology and salvation-experience that gave birth to a christology. The likelihood therefore is that an indian christology will have a similar evolution. Modern India's experience of salvation consists in her achievements and hopes in the political field and the economic sphere, in her independence and freedom, and the rising standard of life secured through toil and struggle. According to the Bible these attainments have divine meaning. Political liberation from Egypt and a richer life in Canaan are God's acts and gifts in which he is truly revealed, met and known. They are also parables, shadows of good things to come, and promise of deeper freedom and fuller life in God's own kingdom. That all life's blessings are God's gifts is constant in the indian *bhakti* tradition. That they have a sacramental character, and point to what is beyond and profound, is implicit in Hindu thought and worship. The idea finds expression as early as the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad* 2,4.5:

"Verily wealth is not dear that you may love  
wealth;  
But that you may love the *Atman*, therefore is  
wealth dear."

The *Atman*, the ultimate freedom and fullness of life, to which India's experience of salvation is pointer and parable, can only be That Reality in which this experience is not finally cancelled out but fulfilled and transformed. And that is the Risen Christ in whom man and his universe enter into the freedom of God and come to their ultimate completion. A theology of national freedom, therefore, and of earthly well-being, as well a theology of the promised land and of the New Testament miracles,

may well constitute an essential ingredient of an indian christology.

(c) Another spiritual feature of modern India is the dilemma in which the young men and women of the land find themselves. On the one hand they want to build a great modern nation with all the help that science and technology can give; meanwhile they are aware of the heavy secularist, even materialist and marxist bias which these aids have in modern history. On the other hand our youth have a natural, though not well-informed, love for their ancient culture and spiritual heritage, from which they dread being uprooted; but they also are afraid that this heritage can make little or no contribution, even by way of motivation, towards the country's industrialization and economic growth. The agonizing problem, then, of India's youth, is to reconcile these two yearnings and these two fears of their spirit. Nothing can meet this crisis with success but an integrated vision of life and reality, in which spirit and matter, time and eternity, earthly concerns and the service of God, are at once affirmed and maintained in a unity that moves through human sorrow into the power and glory of God. The spiritual dilemma of young India is solved only in a full historical Incarnation blossoming into the Resurrection.

(d) An affirmation of man and an acceptance of human existence on earth lies deep within modern movements, within the explosion of freedom, the struggle for well-being and the conquests made by science and technology; within creative action, social liberation and equality. This experience links up directly with the divine affirmation

of man and the world in Jesus Christ, and their ultimate acceptance by God in his Exalted Servant. On different levels, but in a true sense, Christ and the world illumine and explain each other: they belong together.

(e) The soul of modern India is also marked by a deepening sense of the mystery and meaning of suffering. It is only through work and sweat that things can be transformed, and new values and wealth produced. It is only through self-denying service that relief can be brought to the hungry and sorrowing masses. A new India will be born of the self-denial of the old. Thus Hinduism is realizing in a new way the profound truth of its ancient insight into life's basic principle, that it is by losing oneself that one comes by one's true Self. Hinduism is discovering that this paradox is at work within the universe as well as in the world of man and his endeavour. It will therefore be open to the revelation that this is so because the paradox belongs to the very ground of the cosmos and the Ground is He through whom and in whom and for whom all creation exists. When therefore this Lord of creation appeared on the plane of history in order to lead the world to its ultimate destiny, there was a passing through death to life. A theology of the Suffering Servant and of his redemptive cross is thus being shaped in India's experience of toil which uplifts and builds.

(f) Closely related to the point just mentioned is the sense of community which is awakening and developing fast in this country and within its traditional religions. The present striving is not for the individual's private *mukti* (liberation) from

*samsāra*. The goal today is nation-building. And the way is community action and mass movement. Thousands and tens of thousands of men and women are collaborating in plants, factories, firms and corporations of every description in a concerted effort at all-round development. It is of course the individual persons that must put in honest and generous work, but there is no meaningful achievement or national salvation except in and through the community. And the meaning of 'community' keeps expanding from smaller to ever larger groupings. This new dimension of life and development is brought home to religion and society through the nations's international connections in the shape of aids, pacts, trade agreements, embassies, mission and membership of the UNO. Here too, in this sense of community and of common striving and corporate salvation, we look for further, profounder significance and religious meaning. And we recognize the community awareness as a fresh opening in India's spiritual experience for the ingrafting of a theology of corporate personality, which is an essential dimension of christology. The representative and inclusive character of Christ and his work may find here an apt and supple medium for self-expression.

(g) Implied in the community awareness is a sense of service and of the burden of responsibility for the social situation. A religious and christological exploitation of this spiritual growth will help reveal God once more as supremely concerned for the world, and as burdening himself with responsibility for the *yoga-kṣema*, the harmonious and all-round well-being, of every creature. It will further reveal him as engaged in service, and lead



to his recognition when he comes giving, and serving, and washing man's feet, and not grasping, or demanding to be served. It will show him as dweller among men and sharer in our human condition to its darkest depths and final breakdown. Lastly this christological plumbing of the social sense and of the net-work of services will disclose the truth that the Lord-Servant bears our wounds only to heal them and fill them with divine life and light.

(h) A further feature of modern India, not unconnected with the last two points on social responsibility and community life, consists in a new approach to history which is vital to any appreciation of Christ. While the Vedic Aryans, the Greeks and the Semites sought God in nature and in events and outside themselves, men of the *Upaniṣads* discovered the world of the mind and found that religious inquiry was most successfully conducted there. From that time onwards there has been in hindu tradition an emphasis on God's indwelling, and on approaches to God in the realm of the Spirit, and a longing to encounter him always and everywhere as Universal Spirit and the Self of every self. This search is of incomparable religious value, and points to certain basic truths of an indian christology:

i) an indian christology will centre on the Risen Lord who is spirit, and life-giving *Prāṇa*, who is no longer known according to the flesh, who abides in the believer and is *Antaryamin* or the Dweller within, who bestows on man the divine *Prāṇa*, and commands unlocalised worship in spirit and in truth (1C 15/45; 2C 3/18; 5/16; Jn 14/20-23; 17/26; 7/39; 15/26-27; 4/24.)

ii) This christology will not only centre on the Risen Lord who is spirit, but in particular on the indwelling Christ, and on the Christ whose body we are. In the authentic tradition of India we shall seek and find Christ within, in our own self, and experience him as our true, real self, the Self of our self.

An indian christology could perhaps best begin here. The order would be (a) to start with the indwelling Christ who is my real, best and deepest self and (b) to proceed to the Christ who is in all and is the Self of all, the Universal Self and the *Antaryamin*; and (c) to go on to the new community which experiences Christ as indwelling and loving, and shares in his personal experience; and (d) finally to see that his experience was an experience of being wholly from God and for God, and of being born of God; of belonging to the world of sin and death and of God's redemptive action which raises the dead and calls into existence that which is not. Here, in the historical Jesus, with his awareness of the indwelling Father as his best Self, the circuit is complete.

### 3. The question of history

But at this point a difficulty arises. The historical dimensions of the Christ-Faith have been a stumbling-block to many reflective minds in India. Jesus as a particular person and fact of history is, to them, a national and racial figure, limited by time and space and culture. How then could he be the universal Spirit, and the Saviour whom men of all times and climes could freely encounter? For the universal is spirit, not fact. Facts are particular, temporal manifestations of

eternal ideas. One must therefore, according to these thinkers, get beyond the Jesus of history to the ideas of which he is the finest symbol. Jesus' historical situation and action and suffering can mean little or nothing since the infinite can and should be sought and found at any point in *samsâra*, there being no privileged hour, no *kairos*, no fullness of time, no definite consummation towards which everything is hastening.

But this attitude to history is now undergoing a great change, thus vastly enhancing the chances of a full indian christology. In the first place, India's new international involvement, together with her renaissant faith in her destiny and mission to the world, has been creating within her a new appreciation of history which cannot but profoundly influence religious thinking in the country. Books like *The Determining Periods of Indian History* (K. M. Panikkar, 1962) and *Values of History* (Sankaranarayan, 1962) are examples of attempts made by Hindu thinkers to accept time as real, progressive and meaningful. Along with this goes the tendency to interpret *maya* (the phenomenal world) as dependent reality, to make room for real freedom within *karma* (the chain of action and fruit of action), and make social action possible within the doctrine of *niṣkâmakarma* (disinterested action).

In the second place, the international situation of all peoples is daily bringing them up against particular facts, like the splitting of the atom or a decision of Hitler's, which have world consequences and lasting effects. These facts reveal the unity of history both in expanse and in depth. It will be

the task of an indian christology to study this sense of universalism and unity, and from there to proceed to the contemplation of the history of salvation and its unity, and apprehend finally the uniqueness of the Saviour who can be at once a particular historical fact and a universal saving Spirit.

In the third place, an indian christology will have to show in relief the significance Jesus has had for society and social change. If the coming of God on earth, and man's finding of him, and the resultant new attitudes are purely of a private and individual character, then the situating in history of the divine incursion becomes unimportant. But if the coming of God and our encounter with him give rise to new social situations, then history enters into the heart of religion. This approach will not only prepare the religions to accept the Jesus of history as the universal Spirit, but also show the supreme relevance of Jesus for the social revolution and reconstruction in which our country today is engaged.

In the fourth place, the *Gītā* and the *Purāṇas* will at this point be pressed into the service of christology. The *Gītā* was the first book to propound a doctrine of God's descent on earth. Kurukṣetra is conceived as a particular historical situation, and in it Kṛṣṇa is deeply involved. And the Absolute, the Universal and the Ultimate to whom Arjuna is directed is not something beyond Kṛṣṇa, but the visible person and friend standing there face to face with his devotee. Finally the advent and action of Kṛṣṇa are conceived as creating a new social situation: he is come to destroy the wicked and to establish *dharma*, religion and duty, and right conduct.



One last strand we touch upon in the texture of India's present is her contact with christian scriptures. The Sermon on the Mount in particular has come in for recognition, admiration and absorption by large sections of the people. It has been accepted as uniquely Christ's. The appeal of its ideal of peace and its spirit of renunciation has proved irresistible. Does not this point to the necessity of working towards a christology centred on the Sermon and built out of it, and out of values in the indian tradition similar to those of the Sermon? The Sermon is an expression of the Person of Christ, and a sketch of his work. Interpreted in close relation to India's experience of its values today and in the past, it should yield a rich christology.

#### 4. Existential approach

Thus far we have been trying to describe the context and milieu in which an indian christology could evolve. we wish now to bestow a moment's attention on the thought and life processes which will have to assist in its birth. With regard to the method and approach we may ask whether we are to follow the scholastic method of Sankara whose severe logic and systematization made it necessary for him to select from the rich data of ancient scriptures, and neglect aspects which did not fit his scheme of things; or to adopt the syncretic method of the *Gîtâ* which accepts most concepts from the *Upaniṣads* puts them together and stresses *bhakti* leaving the resultant inconsistencies untouched; or to employ with *Râdhākṛṣṇan* both devotion and critique. The problem may be stated in terms familiar to christians. Is it a synoptic and heavily

historical presentation of Jesus that we in India need? Or an interpretation of Jesus-history as given in Paul and in Hebrews, or a Johannine history in the transparency of which the metahistorical and the Absolute shine in their immediacy. The presence of different approaches in the indian and early christian tradition teaches the necessity of adapting our method and language to various schools, thought-patterns and situations.

Is it then possible or advisable to shape a full and firm indian christology for easy distribution, as it were? Rather, should not each apostle learn to hold himself at the Spirit's disposal in an existential situation of tension and dialogue, and seek to understand, re-interpret and re-word the Christ-doctrine from time to time in terms of one's actual encounter with men, with experiences, and with groups? Before this position our own doctrinal formation and programmes of formation stand challenged. For it becomes clear that a merely rational approach, however well equipped, will not suffice. The *Atman* is "other than all that is known, and is above the unknown" (*Kena Up.* 1. 3). "It is not realized through mere doctrine or intelligence or learning. It is reached only by the one who woos it; to him the *Atman* reveals himself" (*Katha Up.* 2 23-24). "No one knows the Son but the Father and nobody has knowledge of the Father but the Son and those to whom it is revealed by the Son". (Mt. 11/25-28.) It is revealed to little ones, to the poor and the meek, to those who are willing to decrease and wane and go through a kenosis and be emptied of *ahamkāra* (or being full of self), and let God be all in all. An indian christology therefore is a common task shared by the hindu, the

christian and Christ. The approach is personal and spiritual, achieved through deep meditation.

New Testament christology is the expression of a living faith experience. Could an indian christology ever come to birth without a union of the Christ-faith with living Hindu or Muslim religious experience as expressed in *bhajana*, *kîrtana*, *arcanā*, *japa*, *pûjā*, *prasāda*, and *niskârā*? (hymns, psalms, offerings, prayers, ritual, sharing, prostrations). Is it possible to secure a fruitful union of these if we are not free to pray our faith spontaneously, and to express our (*bhakti* devotion) in indigenous religious attitudes, words, acclamations, imagery and symbolism? or if the Gospel seed is not released from its case and let fall into the soil of indian religious culture to lose itself there and rise to a new life? The seed, surely, is the life and meaning of the soil, but it is only the soil that can help the seed discover itself in depth and realize itself richly. What makes the christology we are seeking difficult is the fact that so far the Gospel leaven was not unpacked and allowed to lose itself in the total life of the country, to permeate and transform it. Instead we offered God for God, temple for temple, ritual for ritual, segregated the people, and dedicated our efforts more to institution and dogma than to life and to the ferment of the Kingdom. The result has been to retard the development of an indigenous christian life which is the only matrix of an indian christology. What we need is authentic christian existence fully integrated in the indian situation. It will then become progressively self-aware and begin to tell out its own mystery which is Christ. And an indian christology will be the end result.

The central problem therefore is not how to express Christ, to the indian mind, or what phrases

and categories to select from India's sacred scriptures. The central problem is to present Christ as Unique, in his absolutely singular claims, and his exclusiveness as Saviour. It will not do to introduce him as an *Avatâra* (a descent of the divine) or as a way to God. In India he is already recognized as such. He must be shown to be *The Avatâra* and *The Way to God*. It seems safe to say that today Christ's uniqueness can be truly encountered only in the uniqueness of our own life just as in Christ's own day it was the quality of his life and his invincible love that brought home to honest hearts the exceptional mystery and transcendence of his Person. The question therefore is whether we exemplify in our flesh and blood and our community-life something unique which arrests the attention of modern Indians; and whether the Christ-faith develops in us special and unique pattern of life and quality of character not visible elsewhere in such purity and profusion. Jesus underlined love and service as distinctive marks of discipleship. These surely are singular revelations of the Master's uniqueness. Love is like light, self-attesting. We are here far from an abstract, metaphysical, or even literary christology; we are within a dialectic in which we ourselves are interior to an evolving christology.

Given this life-situation, it will be useful to show how the main lines of modern life and development in the realm of spirit and matter—technology, socialization, equality, freedom, the effort to feed and educate all and movements towards one world—how these are converging to a point which can be adequately described and understood only in terms of Jesus Christ towards whom all creation, natural and human, is pilgrimaging in the hope of finding in him its completion and its crown.



After this, I believe, we can safely and profitably see and show how India's religious writings, stories, prayers, and myths have Christ for their deepest meaning; and how they point to him and yearn for fulfilment in him; how he is their Ultimate and Absolute *Atman*. Christ Jesus will then have been presented as the unique source, centre and summit of world reality as well as of India's religious reality.

Lumen,  
Cochin-16

Samuel Rayan

# Anubhava as Pramana of an Indian Christology

THE word *anubhava* in the Hindu religio-philosophical tradition literally means 'to be in fellowship with concrete realities'. In content it is man's realization of the *bhâvâvasthâ*, the existential dimension of reality in its encounter with man. In English the word which approximately carries this meaning may be 'experience'. In concrete terms, *anubhava* implies a cumulative awareness of the Reality in the sentient, intellectual and intuitive spheres of man. Among these spheres there is real psychological overlapping and osmosis of consciousness; they give man a concrete and unique content of *anubhava* as he encounters Reality. It is with this fuller and deeper meaning that we use the term *anubhava* as denoting the person-to-person experience of man with Christ in the Indian context.

The word *pramâṇa* means 'source' or means of information. It implies also 'criterion' by which to measure the progress of an action. It is dynamic in that it takes on new meaning and new dimensions as the action develops. Action contributes to experience, and one unit of experience serves as the *pramâṇa* for the next unit of action. It is here that we see the interrelation of *anubhava* and *pramâṇa* contributing and interacting mutually. Through this interaction, *anubhava* is perfected with the characteristic elements it receives from the past and present stages of action, and is open to its future. Action here is the encounter with Christ of numberless men of every age and

culture. This encounter which constitutes *anubhava* becomes, therefore, the source and criterion (*pramāṇa*) of further *anubhava*.

## A Working Hypothesis

*Anubhava* as *pramāṇa* for building an Indian Christology is a working hypothesis. In science reasonable hypotheses are working materials for new discoveries. So too in dogmatic theology this procedure may be taken as a valid method of scientific investigation.

The starting point of Christology is the Christ-event, the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ as experienced by his disciples. This experience was grace-bearing and effective of salvation. But the grace and salvation were clothed in the socio-cultural expressions drawn from the background of the apostles. The grace-giving experience of the Christ-event was communicated to other communities of men down the ages through the preaching of the apostles, their writings, and especially the sacramental action of the Church. In all, the grace-bearing contact with the Christ-event through *anubhava* constituted the core of Christology, and the cultural expressions that communicated the *anubhava* were its vehicle. These cultural expressions had a flexible character and varied greatly from age to age and from culture to culture. The function of theology is to interpret and explain the actual transmission of this saving Christ-event as presented in Scripture, in the traditions of the churches and the official declaration of the Church. Though the early Church emphasised in its theology the centrality of *anubhava* in the contact with Christ, later theologians took this internal element for granted and neglected it. In a great number of theological manuals Christ is interpreted in terms of ancient

documents without sufficiently stressing the fact that these documents merely record the Christ-*anubhava*, preserved and communicated in a living manner through the activity of the Church.

The records are good and useful for investigating the historicity of the Christ-event, and equally good as a medium of encounter and *anubhava* for the present generation. But they would be sterile and meaningless if they are perpetuated in their cultural particularity. For then the *anubhava* behind them would be prevented from being open to future possible experiences of God according to the existential differentiations of human culture. As it is today, dogmatic theology makes little allowance for the changing cultural patterns in which God speaks and encounters men.

Therefore, dogmatic formulations like "the Hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ", "the Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father", the procession of the Holy Spirit *from both the Father and the Son*", or "*from the Father through the Son*", though they once expressed and promoted the faith-experience of a given community, may not be able to do the same adequately now for other communities and cultures. These formulations are not the last human way of speaking about divine realities which are always universal in salvific orientation. Our life situations and our approach to life and its problems are different from those of ancient times and of the middle ages. Hence even those 'facts' and 'basic truths' behind the dogmatic formulations should be intelligibly presented according to our present *anubhava* and Indian thought patterns. Salutory faith is more than an intellectual assent to elegant



dogmatic formulations. It is rather a grace-touch leading to a personal surrender of one's being to the custody of Christ, and this is a matter of *anubhava*. This is the true *bhakti* (devotion) which is the immediate consequence of *anubhava* as it occurred to St Paul or to Sadhu Sunder Singh.

From the above discussion I shall tentatively propose two conclusions as foundations of a wider Christology. First conclusion is that wherever there is an experience of the saving grace of God there is also the *anubhava* of Christ; for all grace comes from Christ. In this sense the *anubhava* as enshrined in the *Śruti* and *Smṛti*, as well as *anubhava* in its present forms are part of Christology. But to be presented as living contacts with the Word-made-flesh these *anubhavas* should also be communicable to others and made intelligible to them. Otherwise the *anubhava* will be purely interior, communicable only through allegory and analogy and may at best be characterised as mystical experience.

Here comes my second conclusion: Just as the cultural symbols and expressions of the Palestinian Jewish background formed part of the Christ-event as vehicles communicating the *anubhava*, so also genuine religio-cultural expressions of the Indian context have an incarnational character: they too are Christological. It follows from this that Christology need not be tied permanently to the culture-bound expressions of West Asia, provided the historical uniqueness of the Christ-event be fully acknowledged. Here the importance is not in the particular point of place and time but rather in the unity of human history and the community of grace-*anubhava* for all humanity. In the context of this unity all religio-

cultural expressions and individual grace-experience belong to an integral Christology. Hence a Christology that restricts itself to Christian Scriptures and Christian history and neglects grace-*anubhava* and its expressions in the rest of history is defective.

In this approach to reconstructing Christology in the Indian context, Christ may again become a more meaningful point of divine contact instead of remaining a silent figure behind the riddles of past controversies. Instead of controversy, a 'dialogue of experience in the fellowship of Christ' will begin to evolve; and out of our common sharing of experiences of the One Christ a systematic Christology will take shape. This Christology will be strongly backed by, and founded on, the 'revelation of the relevance' of Christ to me and to you, and will transcend the history-bound formulations of an alien culture. As Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, he cannot be confined to the concepts of the past nor bound by the framework of any one culture. Christ is real to me only in my historical present which is circumscribed by its own traditions, intellectual and artistic, religious and social, political, ethical and racial.

Hence the basic question is this: Are we prepared to share the *anubhava* of any Christ-knowing man, irrespective of his external religious commitment, and to initiate a dialogue of Christ-experience (*Christranubhava*)? An affirmative answer will inaugurate herewith a 'theology of religious dialogue', a theology of experience-sharing (*anubhava-sambhâvana*), transcending mere conceptual formulations.

### Basic Postulate and Presupposition

The basic postulate for realizing a Christology

with *anubhava* as *pramāṇa* is the attitude Christ indicated on different occasions in his life.

John said to him, 'Master, we saw a man driving out devils in your name; and *as he was not one of us*, we tried to stop him'. Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; no one who does a work of divine power in my name will be able in the same breath to speak evil of me. For *he who is not against us is on our side*,

(Mk 9: 38-40; cf. also Lk 9:49-50).

By this attitude Christ extends his presence and action far beyond the circle of his explicit disciples. Here surely we have a relevant revelation. The passage indicates that the experiencing of Christ is possible also outside a well-defined visible fold.

This truth seems to have been meditated upon thoroughly by St Paul. In his letter to the Corinthian community he explains this basically Christian conviction as follows:

There are many forms of work, but all of them, in all men, are the work of the same God. In each of us the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose. One man through the Spirit has the gift of wise speech, while another, by the power of the same Spirit, can put the deepest knowledge into words. . . . But all these gifts are the work of one and the same Spirit, distributing them separately to each individual at will. (I Cor. 12: 6-11)

This inspiration of St Paul's may serve as a basis for understanding further the working of Christ in all men of sincere religious commitment, in spite of their unshakable and abstruse interiority-pre-occupation or exteriority pre-occupation in religion. A Christ-current flows beneath the turbulent waters of religious plurality.

## Anubhava as Pramana in Indian Religious Tradition

All through our history we can observe that it is *anubhava* in all its variety that constituted the rich Hindu religious heritage. Surveying rather rapidly the experiential content of Hindu religious culture we may demarcate three important phases:

### 1) Prakṛtyanubhava

The rich variety of the phenomena of nature (*prakṛti*) was the *pramāṇa* of the *prakṛtyanubhava*. Like us, our forefathers passed through trying and tough times of encounter with strange *prakṛti śaktis* (the powers of nature.) The initial *sambhramānubhava* (the experience of wonder) awakened them to an apprehension of a 'Mysterious Power' encircling them, which commanded respect and veneration. Thus the *sambhramānubhava* gave birth to *sādarānubhūti* (experience of reverence) of a *Mysterium tremendum*, an awe-inspiring and terrible hidden Being. Their primitive respect grew to worship; and a religion, originating from natural symbols and the *Hidden Presence* in nature, began to evolve. But unfortunately human imaginations could not always transcend the imagery level of experience in order to discover the invisible mystery behind the shadows. For reasons of concreteness and vividness people began to personify and adore the natural powers as deities. The number of deities almost equalled the number of prodigies. Thus 'polytheistic experience' was the result of man's reaction to the forces of nature. All the same traces of sagacious attempts by men of real intuitive penetration to transcend the level of images to the realm of the 'Mysterious Power' are also discernible in this experience.



*Prakṛtyanubhava* which was a factual experience to some men, assumed mythical forms when the problem of transmission or communication arose. The experience was conveyed by describing it in symbols intelligible to later generations. We call these symbols myths. Myths have no factuality in history but only a functional value. To some they may now appear aesthetically crude and incapable of appealing to a refined sensibility; but to many generations in the past they communicated the *prakṛtyanubhava* of their ancestors in most subtle and effective terms. Anthropological and cultural studies have made this fact abundantly clear. We should have an appreciative sympathy towards the symbolism of the myths of our forefathers. This will enable us to understand the ambiguity of the religious experience of our Indian tradition. Inter-religious dialogue necessarily pre-supposes such a disposition.

## 2) *Srutyanubhava*

While *prakṛtyanubhava* and *prakṛtyârâdhana* (nature-worship) continued, the imagination of the people was haunted by the remembered experiences of their ancestors, as enshrined in inherited myths and symbols. These became objects of meditation in their leisure hours. When writing developed the fruit of their meditation came to be recorded. But before this, for a long period, oral transmission was the only way of communication. Thus the *śruti* (hearing) form of *anubhava* took shape. Hearing and remembering became vital to cultural and religious life.

The *anubhava* which the later generations had through *śruti* or hearing was a sharing in the

*prakṛtyanubhava* of their forefathers. The tone of authority associated with the wisdom of the ancients, made this *śrutyānubhava* appear authentic. This authenticity was again reinforced by the development of ancestral worship. *Śruti* thus came to acquire a certain inviolability and infallibility. The consequence was an uncritical and blind acceptance of *śruti* as divine words spoken in mysterious fashion to some anonymous persons of an inaccessible antiquity, while the simple fact that *śruti* was the communicated form of *anubhava* was overlooked and forgotten.

The main functions of the *śrutyānubhava* were to make the hearer wise (*the pedagogical role*), and god-fearing (*the liturgical role*). We see both these roles well manifested in the *śruti* compilations. *Veda*, the general term given to the *śruti* itself, originates from the mental activity of knowing (*vid* = to know). This knowledge kept up men's faith in the *anubhava* of their fathers, and faith induced them to pay homage to the *Vedas*, which were sung in praise of the manes and the gods. The liturgical role became so dominant that poems or hymns, suited to community chanting in cultic ceremonies, emerged as the basic structure of *śruti*. There was need also of teaching the worshippers the meaning of the *anubhava* implied in the hymns. This pedagogical role was developed by various teachers or *Gurus* who interpreted the Vedic *anubhava* for the understanding of their disciples, as these sat close (*upa-niṣad*) to the *Gurus*, listening to the wisdom of old.

### 3. Bhaktyanubhava

As it is not very easy to draw a dividing line between *prakṛtyanubhava* and *śrutyānubhava*, so also it is not easy to demarcate the beginning of *bhaktyanubhava*.

*Bhakti*, or devotion, seems to have originated spontaneously in the encounter of man with the Supreme Power who commanded his respect and veneration. The inception of *bh-kti* definitely depends on man's apprehension of the Supreme Power as a personal God. Throughout the *śruti* literature man's tentative descriptions of such a personal God are discernible; names and attributes convey, partially at least, the *anubhava* of a personal God. *Īśvara* (the Lord), *Bhagavan* (the Glorious One), *Prajāpati* (the King of the people), *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) are some of these appellations. The religious pursuit of the *bhakti* (devotee) was directed towards a final union with this Power. The highest *anubhava* attained was technically called *sâyûjya*, which meant 'to find oneself in the bliss of God'. It is an experience fundamentally pure and divine whatever it may be called: personal intimacy, *saṁādhi* (deep meditation), *mukti* (liberation) or *kaivalya* (final emancipation). All mean basically a unique *anubhava* which is achieved in communion with God, who is the ultimate point of realisation.

*Bhakti* in this conception is nothing short of an overall commitment of oneself to the *Bhagavan*. It is experientially a faith-commitment which is salutary. The devotee is not a simple worshipper, but a soul surrendered to the custody of *Īśvara*. The experience is that of having reached the safest shelter on the dangerous pilgrimage through this *samsāra-sāgara* (the world of births and deaths). Who will lead an aspirant to the shelter of God? Only a man of real *anubhava*, a *Guru*, who has acquired the insights of the *śruti* as well as obtained a *darśana* (vision) of the *Bhagavan*, is the proper guide entitled to lead others. *Guru* for all practical purposes becomes the *pramāṇa*

in so far as the training of the aspirant in the way to the Lord is concerned. He imparts his *anubhava* as a model for trial, and even sometimes shares his *anubhava* concretely with his disciple. This we can see in the training of Swami Vivekananda by Ramakrishna Paramahansa. This sharing of the Guru's *anubhava* gives an impetus to the disciple to proceed further with greater confidence. Thus *bhaktyanubhava* has its corresponding *pramāṇa*, the *Guru*, who has realised the gracious touch of the Lord. The *Guru's anubhava* when imparted to the disciples is considered to be the *paramprasāda* (supreme grace) of the *Bhagavan*. Contemporary Hindu tradition is firmly built on *bhaktyanubhava* in contrast to the monistic intellectualism of the *Srutipramāṇyavādins*, namely, those who make the scriptures the absolute norm.

Names of such *Gurus* may be enumerated from the time of *Viśiṣṭādrīta*. Ramanuja's name leads the list since it was he that liberated the orientation of *śruty-anubhava* from the monistic whirlpool of solipsism, and steered it towards the attainment of communion with the *Bhagavan*, the glorious Lord. Outstanding figures along the living path of *bhaktyanubhava* are Madhvācārya, Caitanya, Tulsidas, Guru Nanak, Sri Nārāyaṇa Guru, Ram Mohan Roy, Kesub Cunder Sen, Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Sivananda, Gopinath Kaviraj, Ma Anananda Mai and others.

### Anubhava as Pramāṇa of Indian Christology

In the preceding pages we have attempted to trace the basic lines of the development of Indian religious traditions. We have seen that the Hindu tradition emphasizes and attaches great value to the



merit of *anubhava* of every kind to enrich the religious life of man. Now let us turn our attention to exploring the possibility of reinterpreting the Christ-event in terms of real *anubhava*. The first thing necessary would be to consider the content of Christ's own existential *anubhava* of God as realised and manifested in him and through him in the whole cosmic environment. On account of this experience he is the *Jagat guru* (Universal Teacher) capable of initiating every man into the life of realisation of the Blessed Lord. More than anybody else he has the *anubhava*, the direct *darśana* (vision) of the Supreme Power, which he can endlessly transfuse into any number of disciples who trust in his *anubhava* of the Divine. Secondly we have to recapture the Christ-experience of apostolic times. Thirdly we must take into account the totality of the *anubhava* of Indian devotees of Christ. We were generally under the impression that Christ is experienced only by the formally 'enrolled Christians' of the visible fold. But the study of many Christ-interested Indian devotees shows that all of them enjoy some sort of Christ-touch or Christ-experience. Can we recognise and accept these cases of *anubhava* as genuine ones of contact with Christ? If this can be done there is ample scope for a reconstruction of Christology out of the Indian storage of religious experience.

The primitive Christian community experienced Christ as a divine intervention in history for human salvation. We would accept that this *anubhava* was a unique one both individually and socially, but we should remember that it was experienced and communicated within the cultural confines of Western Asia. And it is this communicated form of the primitive Christian *anubhava* that is recorded in the

New Testament. In so far as a communication is capable of imparting a genuine experience the recorded *anubhava* in the New Testament, when properly transmitted, is capable of recreating in us the same primitive Christian experience; the more so because of the presence and action within every man of the Risen Jesus and His Holy Spirit. Thus by means of *śrutyānubhava* we too are in a position to share in the *bhāktīānubhava* of our Christian forefathers. Nevertheless it is our task to develop a meaningful *bhāktīānubhava* of our own, while letting the perennial Christian experience become incarnate in our times and in our cultural environment, so that our commitment and that of our fellow-Indians may be more significant and salutary in our own situation. The Christian *anubhava* in its purity and vitality has to be rediscovered in our Indian spiritual susceptibility after it has been stripped of the West-Asian and Greco-Roman accretions which it has put on in the past. A metamorphosis is inevitable in this regard. It is only thus that the Christian *anubhava* in its historical continuity will reach us and become our *pramāṇa* for systematising a Christology to which our Indian sensibility can respond.

Christianity as a religion is not a code of laws and regulations, nor is it the acceptance of a series of rigidly defined dogmas. It is fundamentally and ultimately an *anubhava*, an experience of the Divine in Christ. It is an experience of Christ received, shared and communicated within the historical context of life. Christ was experienced by the patriarchs and the prophets of old, in anticipation of his historical *avatāra* (incarnation); and when he came he was experienced by 'those who recieved him'. Still living in his community by his presence and action, he is

presence and action, he is completing the course of his *dharma*. There is therefore no scarcity of recurring *anubhava* of Christ even today among his *bhaktâs* (devotees.)

To construct a Christology, *anubhava* may be described as having a threefold dimension:

- 1) *Śruti-yôjyâta* or connaturality with the recorded *anubhava*, in our case the Sacred Scriptures.
- 2) *Sābhâ-yôjyâta* or complementality to the community-experience. The life-witness of the believing and worshipping religious community would come in here.
- 3) *Yukti-yôjyâta* or convenience for intellectual communication, i. e. speculative systematisation in relation to the totality of human experience.

An organic synthesis of the *Christvanubhava* in this threefold dimension, in the perspective of the comprehensive outreach of Christ's action over cultures, will, perhaps, give shape to what we aim at: an Indian Christology.

### Anubhava-sharing

A few hints may be given here regarding our sharing of the *anubhava* of the Indian devotees of Christ: Christ as *Divine Cit* (God's Consciousness) working in us was the content of Brahmabāndhab Upadhyaya's Christ-experience. Sadhu Sunder Sing had the *anubhava* of the *Living Christ* who is the *Antaryāmin* (Indweller in us.) For Ram Mohan Roy Christ was the great *Dharmādhyāpaka* (Moral Teacher) to whom he could commit himself. Keśub Cunder Sen had a meditative awareness of Christ's *Divine humanity*. P.C. Mazoomdar's experience of Christ as 'the *Divine Spirit* in

*human form*' may have yet to be clarified. Swami Vivekānanda's acceptance of Christ as the '*Jīvanmukta*' has a deeper meaning in our religious tradition. Dr. Radhākṛishnan's *anubhava* of the '*Mystic Christ*', and Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of Christ as the *Supreme Satyāgrahi*, are also indicators of the deepest levels of the mystery of Christ who is 'the Light which enlightens every man'. Christ is relevant in one way or other to each and every Indian citizen who consciously or unconsciously utters the great *Upaniṣadic* invocation:

*"Aśto ma sadgamaya, lead me from*  
unreality to Reality,
*Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya, lead me from*  
darkness to Light,
*Mṛtyor ma amṛtāṃgamaya, lead me from mortality*  
to Immortality." (Br. Up. 1,3,28).

We have to listen to such utterances patiently in order to share in the *anubhava* of our fellowmen who sincerely seek the way of the Lord.

## Conclusion

When we propose *anubhava* as *pramāṇa* for an Indian Christology there is no intention of proceeding uncritically and syncretically to adopt only the technical terminologies of the Indian *Gurus*. We must share the real experience-content of those *Gurus* as well as of our own fellow Indians in the way in which they encounter Christ. We should not posit *apriori* concepts in the field of experience; rather, *anubhava* should be allowed to take its own forms of expression or communication. This will depend on the cultural modes that we have at our disposal. And these modes are valid because the Christ-reality is not confined to



Jewish, Greek or Roman cultural forms.

The immediate step to be taken in this line would be to start and encourage dialogical circles of actual religious experience. Opportunities to share in the *anubhava* of the men of other religious commitments should be given to specialists in this field. Informal as well as formal forums of real religious communication could be of great help. Colloquies and inter-religious *satsangas* (prayer-meetings) and free socio-religious intercourse among the people are to be encouraged, so that we may feel one with our fellowmen in encountering Christ in our common cultural environment. Thinking in the spirit of our heritage and making it meaningful for today may be the best way of recreating Christian vitality to bring forth an Indian Christology. Through a Christic understanding of our culture, philosophy, art and religion, we may be able to reach the plenitude of Reality, the Trinitarian God who dwells within the Cosmos and envelops it. We have to rediscover our own Christ first in order to discover our God who transcends space, time and culture.

Through actual sharing religious experience with our fellowmen we have to encounter Christ both as 'hidden' or 'anonymous', and as 'manifest' or 'acknowledged'. To build an Indian Christology we cannot start by accepting ready-made particular cultural formulations. We should start, rather, with the real contents of *anubhava* both historical and present, enjoyed meditatively and directly shared from a personal encounter with Christ, within our cultural environment and community. So we appeal to Christ himself to re-interpret his Self to our cultural receptivity. This will be his new epiphany,

a manifestation to us through his devotees. Thus the *anubhava* of Christ will serve as *pramâṇa* for the *Christujñāna* (Christology) we visualise.

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# Anubhava via Saksatkara to Mukti

When I happened to go through the second number of *JEEVADHARÁ*, the contents of the third issue, indicated in advance, struck me very much. The Magazine claims to be a journal of Christian interpretation; and I see an attempt is made to understand Christ from an Indian point of view, by the *pramāṇa* of *anubhava*. While appreciating such an attempt and approach, I thought of sharing my understanding of the *pramāṇa* called *anubhava* with my Christian friends.

So I would like to say a word about the relationship between three fundamental terms which have a certain psychological interrelationship in the comprehension of their meaning as well as in their conceptual orientation to Reality. The terms are logically set thus: *Sākṣātkāra-Anubhava-Mukti*. Now how are these concepts interrelated in our mental activity of apprehending the Supreme Reality, God, or His manifestation Christ? I am interested in explaining the meaning and relationship of these terms.

Ordinarily people labour under a confusion as to the distinction between *sākṣātkāra* (realization) and *anubhava* (experience). *Anubhava* and *sākṣātkāra*, from the ordinary point of view, mean one and the same thing, but are different on a deeper level. The non-discrimination between them at that particular level is likely to lead the seeker of truth to great mental confusion. The differentiating level is this: Even though a seeker of truth has obtained *sākṣātkāra* of the truth he was searching for, there may not follow

immediately an *anubhava* of the truth. Because *sākṣātkāra* is an intellectual fulfilment, while *anubhava* is an aspect of the personality-fulfilment following the *sākṣātkāra*. *Sākṣātkāra* is an intellectual glimpse of the Reality while *anubhava* is the experience of it following that glimpse. *Anubhava* imprints the image of the Reality concretely and vividly on its seeker. *Anubhava* is not used here in the sense of a comprehensive intuition of Reality, but in the sense of an immediate experience of, or contact with, Reality in our normal psychic awareness. Even though *sākṣātkāra* is an aspect of intellectual intuition, it may not be always an act of awareness, but *anubhava* is always so. That is why it is said that there are cases in which some aspirants to the truth (*sādhaka*) obtain *sākṣātkāra* (intellectual realisation of truth) but without being always conscious of it nor being able to articulate it logically and intelligibly. That is to say, some may get a *sākṣātkāra* of *Brakman* or Christ and yet remain sometimes unaware of this intellectual intuition.

In consequence of the inability of keeping up this intuition on a permanent conscious level, the aspirant fails to understand the deep mysteries of the Truth; and again and again he wanders about in search of wisdom, which is already there in him, lighted even though without flames. If a *mukta puruṣa* (a saint, a liberated one) casually meets such *sādhakas*, he recognises and pays respect to them. As a result of this anomaly, in the phraseology of *Sankaravedānta*, such *sādhakas* attain *sākṣātkāra* in the four stages of their existential ladder\* while not being able to reach the fifth level which is called *jīvanmukti*.

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\* The four stages are: to be free from sin, to practise self-control, to be in peace, and to be seeking after *mukti*.



But if *sākṣātkāra* (realisation of truth) is followed by *anubhava* (experience over and above the *sākṣātkāra*) it terminates, in its normal course, in *jīvanmukti*, which is the final state of mental saturation, when one has attained a consciousness of one's survival after the overcoming of one's inclinations, desires, passions, distinctions and multiplicities. Hence, as there is no real *jīvanmukti* without *anubhava*, there is no real *anubhava* without *sākṣātkāra*. Between these three things there exists a most intimate relationship. If it is said that in a particular case there exists *anubhava* without *sākṣātkāra* it may be safely considered fictitious. There are numerous such fictitious *anubhava*-holders. Sometimes we come across persons who claim to be *jīvanmuktas*. They claim to have *anubhava*; but the moment one finds that their *anubhava* is not preceded by *sākṣātkāra*, one may conclude that it is no real *anubhava* but only a feeling which is often pretentious, and has no intuitive content. Consequently they cannot be called *jīvanmuktas*. Hence we say, no *sākṣātkāra* of Truth means no real *anubhava*; and no real *anubhava* means no *mukti*.

So the logical order is that *sākṣātkāra* must come first and then its *anubhava*, which in turn terminates in *mukti*, which is obtained by man while alive (*jīvanmukti*) or after death (*videhamukti*). If one reaches *mukti* while alive one is called a sage or saint. However, all attain *mukti* (liberation) after death according to the measure of *anubhava* of Truth, following the *sākṣātkāra* thereof.

The *anubhava* of one man, in order to be meaningful and salutary to him and to others, must be communicable. But in order to be communicable it must have an intellectual content of the Truth. The initial

reaching of this stage is called *sākṣātkāra*. If *sākṣātkāra* is an intuition of Truth, it takes communicable form when it is subjected to one's personality in its purposive orientation to *mukti*. This stage is a sort of concrete intimacy with Reality, and so it is called *anubhava*. Until and unless *sākṣātkāra* is transformed into *anubhava*, it remains a mute content lacking communicability and permanency of consciousness. Thus man's *anubhava* of the *sākṣātkāra* about the Reality is that which leads him to final *mukti*.

These subtle distinctions seem to clarify the real validity of *anubhava* as *pramāṇa* for theology which should throw light on the path of one's understanding and pursuit of one's goal, namely, *mukti*. If Christ is Divine, his divinity could be an object of *anubhava* by means of *sākṣātkāra* with a view to the attainment of *mukti*.

The question may arise whether *sākṣātkāra* is necessarily followed by *anubhava*. The answer is: It need not. The whole thing depends on self-purification or the purification of the mind. Unless one's mind is purified by spiritual practices, yoga, penances etc., it cannot have a clear vision of the *sākṣātkāra*, which has already been effected. It should be kept in mind that *sākṣātkāra* as such has only an inclination towards the point of liberation, or *mokṣa*. If in a particular case *anubhava* does not arise in spite of the presence of *sākṣātkāra*, owing to the lack of mental purity, *jīvanmukti* may not follow. All the same *mokṣa* after death is absolutely certain. If on the other hand there is *anubhava* in a particular mind and it is not preceded by *sākṣātkāra* it is a meaningless affair and leads to nothing. Such a person is said to be labouring under an illusion as far as his *mukti* is concerned.

Thus, this clarification of *anubhava*, in its relation to *sâkṣâtkara* and *mukti*, may help Christian interpreters to follow *anubhava* as a proper *pramāṇa* of theology

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# God's Quest for Man in Saiva Siddhanta Experience

India is known for her relentless quest for God whether it be through the vedic sacrifices, the *upanisadic* meditations or the surrender through a *Bhakti*. There is another quest, equally relentless, present in Indian spiritual tradition, which is not known or stressed sufficiently while treating of Indian spirituality. This is the quest of God, of "the Hound of Heaven," for man. As in the psalms of the Old Testament where Yahweh 'besettingly besieges' the soul<sup>1</sup>, as in the life of St. Paul who was pursued and 'overtaken by Christ Jesus'<sup>2</sup>, or in the writings of the mystics who are fond of the metaphor of 'the human flight and the divine chase', the quest of a loving God in pursuit of an unworthy soul He is eager to save, finds beautiful expression in *Saiva Siddhanta*, the best known and most followed religious philosophy of Tamilnadu today.

The central theme of *Siddhanta* philosophy is the unfolding of divine grace in the life of every man, which leads him, through the vicissitudes of innumerable lives, from the bondage of sin to final liberation. The image of the Divine *Guru* coming down to earth to instruct man that 'he may become divine'<sup>3</sup> raises in our minds echoes of the One 'who came to seek and save the lost'.<sup>4</sup>

1. cf. Psalm 139

2. St. Paul, Phil. 8:12

3. Tiruarutapayan, 1, 2:

4. cf. Mt. 9:13



## I The Basic Tenets of Saiva Siddhanta

*Siva Siddhanta* accepts three eternal and fundamental categories, viz. *Pati* (Lord), *Paśu* (soul) and *paśa* (bonds). There is only one Lord and God. He is called *Śiva*, the Auspicious. He is not one among the Trimurtis, *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudrā* (or *Śiva*), but the Supreme God above all gods (*Maha Deva*, *Deva Deva*). *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudrā* perform their functions of creation, maintenance and destruction at the behest of the Supreme God. *Śiva* is the Lord (*Pati*) of souls and His five cosmic functions of *samhara* (destruction), *śrṣṭi* (creation), *sthiti* (preservation), *tirôdhana* (concealment) and *anugraha* (bestowal of grace) are meant for the liberation of souls.

Souls are many, and divine by nature. But they are not identical with God. Only the wicked say 'we are God'<sup>5</sup>. In their earthly condition souls are bound<sup>6</sup> by the three bonds: *aṇava*, *karma* and *maya*. *Aṇava* is the root-impurity (*mû'la mala*). By association with the soul *aṇava* obscures the soul's intelligence and prevents (*pratibandha*) it from realizing its nature as divine. *Maya* limits (*sambandha*) the pervasiveness of the soul and binds it to one body while *karma*, the merits and demerits of past deeds, ceaselessly pursues (*anubandha*) the soul, inclines it towards enjoyment and prevents its release.

## II Souls in Bondage

*Aṇava*, the original impurity, is connate to the

5. "taññilamai manuyirkal cara." (Tayumanavar)

6. *paśu*, etymologically means that which is bound by *paśu*, fetters.

soul as verdigris is to copper<sup>7</sup>. The fact of *aṇava mala* is inferred from the existential situation of the soul as finite, imperfect and limited in intelligence. If the soul were not limited by *aṇava*, it would be omniscient, omnipotent and free from sorrow, sin and all imperfections. *Āṇava* so envelops the soul that the soul is in complete darkness as to its real nature and destiny. Even as physical darkness hides all physical objects, *aṇava* casts its shadow over all souls. However, there is a difference: physical darkness, even when it obscures all objects, shows itself, whereas *aṇava* not only hides all else but also hides itself. *Āṇava* is the root cause of all evil. It generates in the soul bad qualities like *ahankara* (egoism), *môha* (covetousness), sorrow, likes and dislikes. The predicament of the soul in the grip of *aṇava* is described by a *Guru* to his disciple in the following words:

“*Āṇava* is one of the three impurities: It deludes all living things, It is responsible for the absence of good thoughts and the presence of bad thoughts. It prevents the utterance of good words and causes the utterance of evil words. It disables one from doing good deeds and enables one to do wicked ones. It always obstructs the performance of deeds which profit the soul and always aids the doing of deeds hurtful to the soul. It clouds, without a break the good sense of the soul and ever perverts the understanding.”<sup>8</sup>

7. *Sivajñanbodham*, 2. 2, 3. Another example used to describe the three *malas* is the husk, bran and sprout found in the paddy grain. cf. *Sivappirakasam*, stanza 25:

nellin mulai tavitumi pol anadiyaka

niruttituvār itu Saivam nikālttumare

8. Poopillai Attavanai, quoted in Dr. Devasenapati, *Of Human Bondage and Divine Grace* (Annamalai University, 1963) p. 31.

Here it may be asked whether the association with *aṇava* is natural to the soul or something adventitious. If it is natural *aṇava* can never be removed and release becomes impossible. If it is not natural then the question arises how *aṇava* came to be associated with the soul which was originally pure.

The *Siddhantin* holds that the soul is divine by nature and so *aṇava* cannot be natural to it. But as to how or when it came to be associated with the soul, we are completely in the dark. So the *Siddhantin* says that *aṇava* is beginningless. This holds good also for *karma*. As in the other Indian systems, *karma* is a presupposition for *Śiva Siddhanta*. In fact, the *Śiva Siddhantin* is not much concerned with speculations regarding the origin of *aṇava* or *karma*. He takes them for granted. They are factors in the existential situation he finds himself in. The burning question before him is the removal of *aṇava*, the liquidation of *karma* and the liberation of the soul. As Gautama, the Buddha, said, for one who is actually burning in fire, the crucial problem is not to speculate about the nature of the fire or to find out how he came to be in such a predicament but to seek a way of escape from it.

The *Siddhantin* knows for certain that *aṇava* can be removed. But no human effort can achieve this. The grace of the Lord alone can remove *aṇava*. Just as light dispels darkness, the grace of the Lord will remove *aṇava*. However, even the Lord cannot remove *aṇava* before it becomes fit to be removed. The cataract of the eye cannot be operated upon before it is ripe. Similarly *aṇava mūla* also needs to get mature before the divine physician can remove it by the surgery of His grace. This is the difference

between the *aṇava* of *Sāiva Siddhanta* and the *avidyā* of *Advaita Vedānta*. *Avidyā* is unreal and it automatically disappears at the dawn of knowledge. Not so *aṇava*. It is a real, positive entity which is to be removed by a positive act.

*Āṇava mala* ripens through the pleasurable and painful experiences in life. To have these experiences the soul needs a body in which the experiences are undergone, the senses through which it experiences, and a world of objects which provide the material for the experiences. It is to provide these instruments and objects of experience for the soul that the Lord starts the work of creation. Therefore, according to *Sāiva Siddhanta*, creation is not a *līla* or sport of the Lord except in a figurative sense in so far as it is an easy and effortless process for the Lord. Creation has a definite purpose. Seeing the pitiful state of the soul in the grip of *aṇava* and *karma*, compassionate Lord, through creation, provides for souls means of experiencing the fruits of their *karma*, whereby the *mala* gets ripe and the soul becomes fit for liberation.

### Three States of the Soul:

In its association with *aṇava* and before it gets the body and the instruments of experience, the soul is said to be in the *kēvala* state. Here the soul is like an inert substance incapable of any experience. When it is provided with the body, senses etc., it is in the *sakṛta* state. It has all the three *mālas*: *aṇava*, *karma* and *mayā*. When it is freed of all impurities it is in the *suddhā* state. The *sakṛta* state is an improvement on *kēvala* in so far as *mayā* and *karma* make it possible for the soul to realize its sinful condition and long for the grace of the Lord, which alone can save it.



## Experience of Sin and Forgiveness:

The hymns of *saiva* saints and devotees are replete with the sense of sinfulness and the need for grace and forgiveness of the Lord. Ramalingaswami, a nineteenth century *saiva* devotee sings:

"Like the bounding stag I have sought sensual  
pleasures and fallen into the lake.  
I am the greatest sinner among sinners, unwilling  
to part with even a grain of rice to the noisy crow...  
I have taken pride in regarding my darkness as  
light and my desire as the great goal...  
Oh! Thou who dwellest in the hearts of Thy saints,  
I have not the mind to seek the great object of life.  
Father, what can I do to get Thy grace?  
Rule me with Thy grace."

Another devotee, Pattinattar, prays to the Lord:

"The sins of words, the sins of thought,  
The deadly sins of my acts, the sins of sight,  
The sins of questions against the scriptures,  
Forgive, O Supreme Lord, all my sins."

The saints are keenly aware of much that is false and unauthentic in them. Manickavacagar, the golden-tongued saint, acknowledges this as he sings:

"All false am I; false is my heart: and false my love,  
yet if he weep,  
May not Thy sinful servant Thee, Thou soul's  
ambrosial sweetness, gain?"

The same sense of sinfulness is expressed by

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9. Tiruvacagam, translated by Dr. G. U. Pope, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1900) p. 79. The pathos and poignancy of the original Tamil is hardly retained even in the excellent translation of Dr. Pope. The Tamil lines are: yane poy, en nencum poy, en anpum poy  
anal vinaiyen, alutal unnaiperalame.

another saint, Tirunavukkarasu, in the following words:

“Evil, all evil my race, evil my qualities all,  
Great am I only in sin, evil is even my good.”

Whatever be the greatness and intensity of their sins, the devotees are absolutely sure that the Lord will forgive them.

“He forgives me my trespasses and graciously prevents future trespasses.” (Sundarar)

“Lord, O great One! forgive us small beings, our  
trespasses, have mercy;  
When devotees pray thus, Thou art merciful to  
them.” (Sambandhar)

Another devotee experiences the grace of the Lord as the ship that takes him across the ocean of *samsara*:

“Thy grace is all I know, O Gracious,  
The ship that taketh me ashore;  
The hand that me into it leadeth,  
Thy hand, I hold for evermore.” (Tayumanavar)

### III The Saving Acts of the Lord

The Lord is compassionate and merciful. He knows the pitiful plight of souls in bondage and is eager to save them. All His actions are directed to this end.

#### The Cosmic Functions:

The *pñca kṛtya* or the five cosmic functions are the expressions of God's love and care for man. All these functions are acts of grace, directed to the liberation of souls from *samsara*.

*Samhâra* 'destruction' is to give rest to souls. In *samhâra*, everything is resolved into the first cause. As sleep refreshes the individual, the sleep of universal creation in *pralaya* affords rest to souls. *Sṛṣṭi* 'creation' enables souls to eat the fruits of their *karma* and helps them progress towards final liberation. When souls eat the fruits of their *karma*, *Sthiti* (preservation) is exercised. *Tirôbhâva* (concealment) brings about the maturing of *mala* by concealing the potentialities of the soul and enabling the bonds to work. All these functions ultimately lead to the fifth function, *anugraha* (bestowal of grace). By *anugraha* the Lord liberates the soul once and for all from bondage.

### Puranic Episodes:

The *Sivapurâṇas* are full of episodes narrating the heroic deeds of the Lord. Manickavacagar, in his incomparable *Tiruvâcagam*, sings the "sacred songs of Sivan's renowned acts." All these acts manifest the supremacy of Lord Siva above all other gods and at the same time show His love and concern for his devotees in distress.

One of the episodes frequently repeated is that of *Tripurasamhâra*, 'the burning of the three cities'. It is found in the *Yajurveda* and is elaborated in the *Purâṇas* and the *Mahâbhârata*. Three *asuras* (giants) by their *tapas* (asceticism) had acquired three flaming forts, and unleashed woe and destruction on men and *devas*. The *devas*, in a body, repaired to the Supreme Lord and besought His aid. The Lord listened to the prayers of His suppliants in distress, and 'by a smile', burnt the cities to ashes.

Whether the *purâṇic* episodes are to be taken

literally or to be interpreted symbolically is a moot point among the *Siddhânta* scholars. In one of the early *Siddhânta* works, *Tirumantiram* by Tirumôlar, the following interpretation of the above episode is given:

“The Ancient of days with water in his coral braids  
Destroyed the triple city, say the fools.  
The three forts are the product of the triple *ma'la*  
Who knows what happened next?”.

Here it is stated that the three forts are the three *ma'las* or *pâsa*. A well known *Śiva Siddhânta* scholar, J. M. Nallaswamipillai, draws out the allegory as follows:

“The *asuras* typify the human monad, in itself pure, but working mischief through its encasement in the flesh and senses (flaming forts). Liberation comes when these coverings are destroyed and the feet of the Lord reached... and this is called destruction or *śaṁhāram*. This is merely destructive conquest of flesh, a conquest of *Ajñānam* by knowledge and Grace of God (*Patijñānam*)”.<sup>10</sup>

### The Lord assuming forms:

The Lord is formless. But out of love and compassion for souls in distress He assumes forms. He appears not only in human form but even in sub-human forms in order to seek and save souls. The reason why the Lord assumes forms is elaborated by Arulnandi Sivacharyar, one of the four philosopher-saints, as follows:

“Unless the Supreme can assume forms we cannot have manifestations of *pañcakṛtya* and of His grace

10. *Śivajñānasiddhiyar* (Tr), (Meykandan Press, Madras, 1913) p. 148.



to His *bhaktas*. We cannot get the sacred revelations. We cannot eat the fruits of our *karma* and seek release by *yoga* and by sacred initiation."<sup>11</sup>

### The Divine Guru:

The form par excellence assumed by the Lord is that of the Divine *Guru*. The Lord assumes this form in order to impart saving knowledge to the soul. *Saiva Siddhânta* is one with *Advaita Vedânta*, *Nyâya* and *Sâmkhya* in its assertion that knowledge alone can lead to ultimate liberation. The *Siddhântin* affirms in unmistakable terms that knowledge obtained through human effort or instruction is not saving knowledge. Hence it becomes necessary that the Lord Himself appear as *Guru* to instruct the soul as to its real nature and destiny. This appearance of the Lord is possible because "the Lord is present in the soul in manifest form like butter in curd whereas He is latent in the rest of creation like butter in milk." The Lord manifests Himself to souls in three different ways in accordance with the progress they have made on their way to *môksha* (state of liberation).

Souls are of three classes: *Vijñânakala*, *pralayâkala* and *sakala*. *Vijñânakalas* are comparatively pure souls. They have only the root-mala, *âṇava*, to be removed. *pralayâkalas* have two malas, *âṇava* and *karma*. They are souls in the state of *pralaya* or world dissolution. Since there is no evolution of *mâya* in that state, the souls are rid of *mâyâ mala*. But *karma* (the merits and demerits of the past deeds) still persists and these will endow the soul with an appropriate body at the beginning of the next creation. *sakalas* are the souls in *samsâra*, with all the three malas, *âṇava*, *karma* and *mâyâ*.

11. *Sivajnânasiddhiyar*, supakkam, I, 54; cf. I, 47.

These souls may be called the higher, middle and lower (*uttamar, mattimar, atimar*) classes. The Lord instructs them according to the way suited to each class. *Vijñānakalas* are instructed from within, in the first person, through intuition and inspiration. To the *pralayākālas* the Lord appears in His divine form as described in the *Āgamas*.<sup>12</sup> In this form the Lord has four shoulders, three eyes and a blue throat, which are signs signifying His functions of creation, destruction and preservation or providence. The instruction is imparted directly, in the second person.

*Sakalas* which are living in the darkness and delusion caused by the three *ma'as* are instructed by the Lord in the third person. When the soul is sufficiently prepared through austerity etc., He appears to the soul in human form as the *Guru* and imparts the saving knowledge.

### A Prince among the Savages:

The condition of the soul in its association with the body and the five senses, and its subsequent liberation through the instruction of the divine *Guru* are brought out by the story of the prince lost among savages. While quite young a prince was lost in the forest and was brought up among savages. Not knowing his real status as a prince, he considered himself one of the savages and led a savage life. The king, hearing about the condition of his son, came to the forest, met the prince and instructed him in person about his true status as the king's son and restored him to his royal status.

The soul's plight in the world is similar to that of this prince. The soul is divine by nature but in

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12. The *Āgamas*, along with the *Vedas*, are the authoritative scriptures of *Śaiva Siddhānta*. If the *Vedas* are general for all the Hindu sects, the *Saivagamas* are special to *Śaiva Siddhānta*,

its earthly condition, because of its association with the body and the senses, it is not aware of its true nature. Like colours reflected in a prism, sense-impressions are reflected in the soul. Deluded by these sense-impressions the soul identifies itself with the senses and lives in total oblivion of its divine nature. The Lord appears to the soul in the form of a *Guru*, instructs it regarding its real nature and unites it to Himself.

### God's Man-becoming:

In the concept of the divine *Guru* we have the highest manifestation of the divine quest for sinful man, as conceived in *Sa'va Siddhânta*. The *Siddhântin*, however, does not accept the idea of *avatâr* which has a prominent role in the sister religion, *Vaiṣṇavism*. The *Siddhântin* argues that if the Lord is born, He must also die<sup>13</sup>. But birth and death will imply that the Lord is subject to the bonds of *âṇava* and *karma*. This is incompatible with the nature of the Lord as eternally free.

When the Lord assumes forms He does not receive them from *mâya* as the souls do. His form is evolved out of his own *Śakti*<sup>14</sup>. It is a form of grace. The body assumed by Lord Siva is a non-material, spiritual one, akin to the body ascribed to Christ by Docetists in the early centuries of Christianity.

13. Some scholars attribute birth to the Lord, but not death cf., Umapati Sivacharyar, Pottipahrodai 'lines 69.71: "He who has no birth, was born"

Piravam mutalvan pirantu  
Nenchuvipututu, lines 10—12: "He who does not die"  
marian

14. Siddhiyar, supakkam, 1,41: "His body is not of maya, He appears through His sakti"

Kayamo mayaiyantu kanpatu  
Satti tannal

However, it is not easy to reconcile this *Siddhānta* view of the spiritual body with the actual lives of the *Gurus* recognised as such by the *Siddhānta* devotees. Two such *Gurus* are Tirujñānasambandhar<sup>15</sup> and Meykandadevar,<sup>16</sup> both of them historical persons, whose lineage, place of birth, lives and works are recorded in the history of *Sāiva Siddhānta*.

### Vicarious Suffering:

The idea of a suffering God also is beyond the pale of *Siddhānta* philosophy. As the Lord has no *āṇava* or *karma* He cannot suffer. Moreover, the *Siddhāntin* believes that each soul must experience the fruits of its actions whether it be painful or pleasurable. Nobody can do this for the soul. All that the Lord can do is to illumine or instruct the soul and make it realize its true nature. Once this realization dawns, there will not be any more attachment. There will be a balancing of *karma* (*karma sāmya* or *iruvinaiooppu*) and descent of grace (*śaktinipāta*).

However, glimpses of vicarious suffering, the figure of a God who takes upon Himself the sufferings of creatures, are found in *Siddhānta* literature. One such instance is the episode where the Lord drinks *hālāhala*, a dreadful poison, to save the whole universe from total destruction. The *devas* and *asuras* were churning the milky ocean to extract the ambrosia of immortality. Unfortunately for them, before the ambrosia was gained, a most dreadful poison, *hālāha'a*, made its appearance and began to burn up everything. The panic-stricken *devas* promp-

15. Umapati Sivacharyar, Nenchuvidututu, 162: "The great Guru, Sambandha, is my Lord"

Sambandha mamuniyen tampiran.

16. Arulnandi Sivacharyar, Irupairupatu, stanza 5.



tly withdrew and besought Lord Siva to save the universe from destruction. The Lord took in the poison and held it in His throat. For, if He were to swallow it, the beings within Him would be destroyed and if He were to spit it out, the whole world would go up in flames. The throat of the Lord was stained by the poison. Hence the Lord's title, "*Nee'akantha*," "the blue-throated," reminiscent of his saving deed.

The experience of Saiva saints regarding God's seeking and saving of sinful man has much in common with the experience of deeply religious persons in other religious traditions. Man's sense of sinfulness, his inadequacy, and his inability to save himself by his own unaided efforts are common to all the devotional literature in the world<sup>17</sup>. The devotee finds himself a prisoner to worldly desires, attachments and pleasures. He desires to be freed of these fetters but finds that his own unaided efforts are of no avail. Hence his plaintive cry to the Lord to extend His saving arms and lift him out of the trammels of *samsâra*.

To his pleasant surprise, the devotee discovers that the Lord is more anxious to save him than he himself is to be saved. The Lord is there always ready to bestow His love and grace. Man has only to turn to the Lord and receive them. As long as he turns away from God grace cannot touch him. The sinner must give up his evil ways and be converted to the Lord. The grace of the Lord (*Arul Sakti*) will accomplish the rest. Man's whole being will be illumined by the light of the Lord's grace, the darkness of sin will be dispelled, and the soul ultimately freed from its bondage.

Varansi

Chacko Valiaveettil.

17. Here we may recall that *Śivānandalahari*, 100 stanzas of exquisite devotional verse in Sanskrit, addressed to Lord Śiva, is ascribed to Śankarâcharya, the great exponent of *Advaita Vedanta*.

# Christology 1960-1970: A Survey\*

"Today the time-unit is not a century, but a decade." This observation of Weizsäcker and others<sup>1</sup> is valid also in the theological field. That is why we have not dared to survey the 'Christology of the last century' nor 'of the last quarter of a century.' In this essay we would like to discuss a few representative authors who will let us feel the pulse of the Christological situation of the last decade. In the choice of authors originality of thought was one of our criteria (not that all the originalities are acceptable realities); purely exegetical researches, for obvious lack of space, have been left out; and as far as possible we have let the authors speak for themselves.

## Christology 'from below'

Pluralism has been a catchword in the theological field during the last decade. And this is true of Christology, as well. Difference in the starting-points, difference of philosophical and theological background, different preoccupations, difference of linguistic traditions (is language important?), and the difference in the audience and in the hermeneutic situation have all contributed to this pluralism. Despite this variety and multiplicity and even contradictions one might designate the Christology of the last decade as decidedly a 'Christology from below'. Christology can be 'from below' in two ways: either

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\* I. C. von Weizsäcker et al., *Das 19. Jahrhundert: eine Team-Prognose für 1970 bis 1980*, Hamburg, 1969, p. 1

because it starts from the man Jesus of Nazareth (the historical starting-point), or because it starts from the man whom Jesus of Nazareth encounters (the anthropological and, or existential starting-point.)

## Rudolf Bultmann

Despite all that we have to say against his radicalism, we must accept the fact that really Bultmann has 'won the day'<sup>2</sup> both in protestant and in catholic theology, and carries it even now. During the period under consideration he has an original contribution to our topic: *Das Verhältnis der christlichen Christus-botschaft zum historischen Jesus* (1960)<sup>3</sup> in which he restates all that he had previously said about Christology<sup>4</sup>, but with a nuance.

When we talk about the historical Jesus what concerns us, according to Bultmann, is not the 'how' nor the 'what' of Jesus but only the 'that' of Jesus, only the fact that he is come into the world as the revealer of God; and we cannot, in fact, know anything more than this 'that' (p. 450). Can we then

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2. What Rahner says of it is worth mentioning: "Granted that a great deal of Barth and his achievements will remain, the fact is that Bultmann has really won the day over Barth in European protestant Theology as a whole", *Theology and Anthropology*, in: (ed.) T. P. Burke, *Word in History*, (1966) London, 1968, p. 16.

3. (The relationship between the Christian Christ-preaching and the historical Jesus), Heidelberg, 1960; reprinted in: R. Bultmann, *Exegetica*, (1967) Tübingen, pp.445-469, to which page references are made in the text.

4. See Bultmann's works: *Jesus and the Word* (1926), Fontana, 1958; the articles in: *Faith and Understanding*, vol. I (1933) SCM, 1969; pp. 116-144; *On the Question of Christology* (1927); pp. 220-246; *The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul* (1929); pp. 262-285; *The Christology of the New Testament* (1933); *Theology of the New Testament* (1948) SCM, Vol. I, 1958 & Vol. II, 1967; *Das Christologische Bekenntnis des Ökumenischen Rates* (1951) in: *Glauben und Verstehen*, vol. II (1952) Tübingen, 1968, pp. 246-261; *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (1958) SCM, 1966.

know nothing about Jesus' life? Yes, we can. Only that we should not consider the Synoptics as the biographies of Jesus (p. 451). All that we can know of Jesus is that he was a Jew, a historical figure within the framework of Judaism, although he radically overcame it<sup>5</sup>; he had at the most a prophetic consciousness (of being commissioned by God to preach the eschatological Kingdom of God), but he did not consider himself as the Messiah (p. 452<sup>6</sup>). The narratives about his death are coloured by the Easter faith (p. 453) and the Easter stories are nothing more than picturesque and symbolic narration of the Easter experience<sup>7</sup>. This experience gave the disciples a new understanding of Jesus, from which evolved the whole Christological preaching of the early Christian community: if Jesus preached God, the disciples preached Jesus; if the preaching of Jesus was eschatological, that of the disciples was Christological (p. 456). Thereby they made Jesus more than what he was, more than he thought of himself. They were legitimate in doing so: for they thereby expressed their faith in him. But it is we who are making a mistake, if and when we take them literally; we should rather take them for what they are, and try to find out what they mean.

But in a sense the appearance of Jesus and his preaching implied a Christology, in so far as he considered himself the eschatological phenomenon. (p. 457) The disciples, however, tried to express this 'eschatological' character of Jesus through such concepts as the Messiah, the Son of Man, etc. And

5. R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its contemporary setting* (1949) Fontana, 1964, pp. 84 ff.

6. cfr. *Faith and Understanding*, vol. I, pp. 266 ff.

7. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, II, p. 56f.



he was no more considered as a past event, but as present — present in the preaching, in the Kerygma. The Kerygma, so to say, represented the historical Jesus: "Jesus is risen into the Kerygma" (p. 469). So, Bultmann would argue, what is important for us is not the exact *hi-story* of Jesus, but the cause, the message, of Jesus.

### Rediscovery of the 'Historical'

Can we divorce the existential present from the historical past? Despite all the protestations of short-sighted enthusiasm for the 'present,' the historical roots in the past and the prognostic hope in the future are indispensable to any meaningful philosophy of life. The present grows out of the past, and is sustained by the hope of the future and grows into the yet unknown future, for which the only guarantee perhaps is the past.

Bultmann's disregard for the 'historical' aroused strong opposition from such scholars as J. Jeremias, H. Conzelmann, O. Cullmann, and even from his own disciples such as E. Kasemann, G. Ebeling, H. Braun, G. Bornkamm, who could not so lightly dispense with the 'historical.'

### Joachim Jeremias

In his work *Das Problem des historischen Jesus* (1960)<sup>8</sup> the New Testament scholar of Gottingen, J. Jeremias, repudiates the Bultmannian position. For him the historical Jesus is central to Christian faith. Without him the sources (p. 13) and the Kerygma (p. 15) would be unintelligible. For, "although some of the external details of the course of Jesus' life are not

8. Stuttgart, 1960 (*The Problem of historical Jesus*)

clear, his message itself is clear enough" (p. 13). And for pin-pointing the preaching of Jesus, he has two criteria: the terms *Abba* and *Amen*, which are without contemporary parallels and therefore indicate the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus, the nucleus of his preaching. The history of Jesus, however, must be subjected to historical research and criticism, and for this we are better equipped today than before. The pitfalls of the life-of-Jesus theologies are a warning for us, "against trying to know more than we can" (p. 16), and form criticism teaches us that the Gospels are the end products of a long process and that the message of Jesus and the preaching of the primitive Church do not belong to the same layer of history: "They are related as call and answer; and the decisive thing is not the answer, but the call" (p. 23).

### Wolfhart Pannenberg

The systematic theologian of Munich, W. Pannenberg, takes universal history as the starting-point for his Christology. For him universal history is the all-embracing horizon of Christian theology as a whole (GF, p. 22<sup>9</sup>). The history that God makes is not something which asks us to look backwards, but forwards, even beyond death, into the future (ibid). This future of universal history, the climax of the historical process moving towards the totality of truth and reality is revealed in Jesus Christ (ibid).

### Centrality of Resurrection

This climax or radical fulfilment of history

<sup>9</sup> W. Pannenberg, *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie*, Gütersloh, 1964 (abbreviated as GF in the text); *Grundzüge der Christologie*, Gütersloh, 1967 (abbreviated as GZ in the text); *Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu*, in: *ZThK* 65 (1968) pp.105-118; *Offenbarung und Geschichte*, 1961.

achieves its concrete form in the resurrection of Jesus; for it is what humanity has ever been hoping for — the conquest of death and a secure future for life. But this climax is of a 'proleptic' character, in so far as what happened in Jesus is still a future for the world, "is transformed into promise for us" (GZ, p. 105)

Resurrection is a historical phenomenon, and as such is the legitimation of Jesus' claim to authority and divine commission. If death were the last event of Jesus' life, if Jesus had not risen, then Pannenberg would argue like Paul, the whole history of Jesus would have been a tragedy and his claims and messages would have been meaningless. (GZ, 110). Hence he cannot accept the theological positions of Karl Barth<sup>10</sup>, R. Bultmann<sup>11</sup> and K. Rahner<sup>12</sup> that the resurrection is not a new event after the death of Jesus, but only the revelation of what had been achieved on the cross (GZ, p. 109).

The historical problematique of resurrection revolves around two traditions: the appearances of the risen one and the narratives of the empty tomb, which are factual narratives for him, because they have a history of traditions behind them (GZ, p. 85 103). But admittedly, our speech about the resurrection has a proleptic structure, in so far as it is a metaphorical and symbolic language; a way of speaking about a non-earthly reality which has never been the object of our experience, in terms of earthly imagery and thought-patterns (GZ, p. 70). But this proleptic structure cannot be avoided, as

10. K. Barth, *Dogmatics*, IV/2, pp. 136ff; 156ff.

11. R. Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, I (1948) London, 1964, pp. 38 ff.

12. K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations* IV (1959), London, 1966, p. 128

long as we do not have a language suitable to express the reality of resurrection adequately (GZ, p. 413).

### Jurgen Moltmann

J. Moltmann builds up a Christology on the basis of the philosophy of hope of E. Bloch<sup>13</sup> and the Hegelian idea of the 'becoming' of God.<sup>14</sup> Fundamental to Christology are both the death and the resurrection of Jesus: they stand in dialectical relationship to each other: "Just as the resurrection alone manifests the meaning of the cross of Christ, so his cross alone makes the resurrection meaningful for us. Resurrection-faith can be grasped only as 'faith in the crucified one'" RRF, p. 214.

Though "what the 'resurrection of the dead' really is, and what 'actually happened' in the rising of Jesus is a thing which not even the New Testament easter-narratives profess to know" (TH, p. 197), still Moltmann believes that a purely historical and purely existential approach cannot do justice to the easter-narratives, because the existential interpretation forgets the factual side, and the historical approach forgets the fact that the disciples were not 'archivists, but missionaries' (TH, p. 181; 187f.). So the historic phenomena and hence the resurrection, too, become intelligible only "within a decidedly eschatological horizon of expectations, hopes and questions about the promised future" (TH, p. 190f.). For the "easter appearances are bound up with this eschatological

13. Ernst Bloch, *Prinzip Hoffnung*, 2 vols (1938-1947), Frankfurt, 1960.

14. J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (1964) SCM, 1967 (abbreviated as TH when page references are made in the text); *Perspektiven der Theologie*, München, 1968; *Religion, Revolution and Future*, New York, 1969 (abbreviated as RRF); *Die Zukunft als neues Paradigma der Transzendenz*, in: *Internationale Dialog Zeitschrift*, 1(1969) pp. 2-13.



horizon, both in what they presuppose and call to mind, and also in what they themselves prefigure in and provoke" (TH, p. 191f; cfr. p. 196).

## Willi Marxsen

The New-Testament professor of Münster, Willi Marxsen, raised a new wave of discussion through his book: *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth* (1968)<sup>15</sup>. In it he follows R. Bultmann closely, and is supported by his own exegetical investigations.

The statement that 'Jesus is risen' is for him an interpretative statement (p. 138), an inference derived from the "reality of personal faith" (p. 139), from the experience of being called to the faith by Jesus (p. 138; 143). How can Jesus evoke faith unless he was alive? The idea of resurrection of the dead was then ready to hand in the milieu and the disciples made use of it (p. 175) and thus the miracle of personal faith is transformed into the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus, which is the externalisation of the idea of personal faith (p. 145). This idea itself is expressed in other interpretations such as 'exaltation' as in Hebrews and 'ascent to the Father' as in John (p. 146). We on our part must find out our own ways of interpreting the self-same reality of personal faith in concepts intelligible to us (p. 148). Marxsen is not against using the idea of resurrection even today; but he warns us, "we must know what we are confessing through this statement, and what we are not" (ibid).

15. SCM, London, 1970 (to which references are made); cfr. other works of W. Marxsen, *Anfangsproblem der Christologie*, Gütersloh, 1960; *Die Auferstehung als historisches und als theologisches Problem*, Gütersloh, 1964.

### John A. T. Robinson

The Anglican bishop of Woolwich, John A. T. Robinson, until recently known only as a New Testament scholar<sup>16</sup>, became famous through his book *Honest to God* (1963)<sup>17</sup>, which was both a scandal and a catalyst to much deeper exploration of the exact idea of God.

On the basis of his interpretation of God as the ground of our being, which is Love, he tries a re-interpretation of Christology. The traditional Christology, he says, has worked within a frankly supernaturalist scheme: "From 'out there' came graciously into the human scene one who was not 'of it' and yet who lived genuinely and completely with it" (p. 64). But this view of Christology is dominantly docetic (p. 65ff.) and cannot be substantiated from the New Testament: "The New Testament says that Jesus was the Word of God, it says that God was in Christ, it says Jesus is the Son of God; but it does not say that Jesus was God, simply like that" (p. 70). Jesus never claimed to be God, personally; yet he always claimed to bring God, completely (p. 73). This means that Jesus reveals God by being utterly transparent to him, precisely as he is nothing in himself. He is the full revelation of God on the cross, where he surrenders himself completely in love (p. 74).

For us therefore Christ is 'the man-for-others,' the one in whom Love (God) has completely taken over, the one who is utterly open to, and united with,

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16. His important works in this field are: *Jesus and His Coming*, SCM 1957; *Twelve New Testament Studies* SCM, 1962; *The Body: A Study of Pauline Theology*, SCM, 1962.

17. SCM, 1967, to which page references are made.

the ground of his being. And this life for others, through participation in the Being of God is his transcendence, his divinity (p. 76). Our redemption likewise, is realized when we live up to the idea of life in Christ, when we ourselves become men-for-others. "This calls for a secular holiness: The test of worship is how far it makes us more sensitive to the 'beyond in our midst,' to the Christ in the hungry, the naked." (p. 90).

### Christology in the post-theistic Theologies

A short-lived phenomenon in the theological field (of the USA) during the 1960s is the death-of-God movement, whose representatives have perhaps this much in common, that all of them speak of a loss of transcendence in the modern secular world; this means the absence or meaninglessness or the death of the God of traditional Christian thought; and the only substitute for God now is the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth.

### Gabriel Vahanian

When Vahanian speaks of the 'death of God' and the self-invalidation of Christianity<sup>18</sup> he does not mean that in the future man will be religionless or godless (p. 30); he wants only to stress the fact that God is absolutely the *Other*, and that he does not necessarily coincide with what we make of him (p. 31). In such a situation what is the role of Christ? In the Christ event God conceals, even forsakes, his divinity (p. 28). He asks if we do not

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18. G. Vahanian, *The Death of God*, (1957) New York, 1967; *Wait Without Idols*, New York, 1964; *No Other God*, New York, 1967: to this last work are references given in the text.

misunderstand the Fathers of the Church "when we fail to realise that a good deal of their talk about the divinity of Christ had to do with the 'humanity' of God" (p. 29). And incarnation means that the divine nature manifests itself in no other way than through the human nature; namely that the human is the only access to the divine (p. 33f.). Jesus, however, is no substitute for God (p. 34), for without God there is no Jesus either (p. xii).

### William Hamilton and Thomas J. J. Altizer

Hamilton and Altizer are much more radical in their affirmation of the death of God<sup>19</sup>. According to Hamilton in this godless situation Christ is the "only one essence of Christianity" (NE, p. 12). And there is no divinity apart from Jesus; for Jesus as the suffering Lord had corrected, destroyed and transformed the idea of divinity (VE, p. 90). The divinity of Jesus is not a withdrawal from the world; it is full consent to abide in the world, and to allow the world to have its way with it" (NE, p. 90f). And the resurrection of Jesus means "the making present and available to men of faith the form of Jesus' lordship as a form of humiliation and suffering. He is risen, with the marks of his suffering still upon him!" (NE, p. 116, note).

For Altizer, too, in becoming flesh God has negated himself; he has ceased to exist as transcendence. From now on God is Jesus: "A Christian proclamation of the love of God is a proclamation

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19. W. Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity* (New York, 1966) (abbreviated in the text as NE); T. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, Philadelphia, 1966 (abbreviated in the text as Gospel); W. Hamilton & T. Altizer, *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, New York, 1966.



that God has negated himself in becoming flesh, his word is not the opposite of the intrinsic otherness of his primordial Being, and God himself has ceased to exist in his original mode as transcendent or disincarnate Spirit; God is Jesus" (*Gospel*, p. 68f.).

### Paul van Buren

In his book *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (1963)<sup>20</sup> Van Buren applies the techniques of linguistic analysis to discover the secular meaning of the Christian message. According to him religious statements do have a meaning, though "the straightforward use of the word 'God' must be abandoned" (p. 100); their meaning is inaccessible because of the unworkable language used (p. 81); only linguistic analysis can fully explore and clarify them.

His final conclusion is that all that we can hold on to is Jesus of Nazareth as a "man singularly free for other men, and as a man whose freedom became contagious" (p. 157); and the easter event, which is basic for Christian faith (p. 197), means that 'discernment' situation in which the disciples began to participate in the freedom of Jesus, began to experience the contagious character of his freedom (p. 134). The divine and human natures of Christ simply indicate these two aspects of the freedom of Jesus (p. 166). Christ's transcendence consisted in his solidarity with men: "He was truly man in that he was as involved in life, as mixed up in politics, as much in the middle of human hate and love, friendships and enmity, as it is possible for man to be, and he was like this in fulfilling his calling to be present for others. . . He stood apart from them for the very

20. SCM, 1966, to which page references are made in the text.

reason of his solidarity with them; he was the one man who truly existed for others" (p. 54).

### Harvey Cox

The Harvard theologian, Harvey Cox, states, in his book *The Secular City* (1965)<sup>21</sup> that our modern world is characterised by secularisation (which designates the content of man's coming of age) and by urbanisation (which describes the context in which it is occurring, and which is characterised by diversity and disintegration, tolerance, anonymity and impersonality) (p. 4). This secular world, however, has "no serious interest in persecuting religion. Secularisation simply by passes and undercuts religion and goes on to other things" (p. 2)

In this contemporary situation of God's hiddenness, God does not appear in Jesus; He rather hides himself in him "in the sense that...he is not anything that religions have wanted or expected from their gods" (p. 258). And in Jesus "God is teaching man to get along without Him, to become mature, freed from infantile dependencies, fully man. He (God) will not perpetuate human adolescence, but insists on turning the world over to man as his responsibility" (p. 258f.).

### Dorothee Soelle

Dorothee Soelle of Cologne University belongs to the post-theistic theologians, and her preoccupation is specifically Christological<sup>22</sup>. For Christ is the only light in these days when people are gripped by the

21. SCM, 1967, to which are references given.

22. D. Soelle, *Christ the Representative* (1965) SCM, 1967; cfr. also her *Atheistisches Gott Glauben*, 1968.

anguishing experience of insecurity and non-identity, when people can no longer reconcile this experience either with theism or atheism (p. 11).

Christ is our only consolation because he is our representation before God and God's representation in the world (p. 106). His representation is characterised by provisionality, identification and dependence (*ibid*). These characteristics mean that though Christ identifies himself with us "securing us time and delay" (p. 116), still his representation is provisional, i.e. incomplete, in so far as in him "the Kingdom of God is present and still not present" (p. 110), and in so far as his representation depends on us for its completion, because "the individual can still forfeit his share in the revealed salvation, can still opt out of it" (p. 125).

Christ's representation of God among men takes on more significance in the post-theistic age (p. 131). Now Jesus "comforts those whom, up to now, God has left in the lurch, he heals those who do not understand God, feeds those whom God allows to go hungry" (p. 137). Furthermore, in these days his representation is the only possible experience of God (p. 141).

The identification with God, which Christ ventured and pioneered, means that this identification is possible for us also. We too can now play God for one another (p. 142) But how? Through love; for "Love represents the absent God in the world" (p. 146).

### **Transcendental Christology: Karl Rahner**

Karl Rahner, Professor of Dogmatic Theology at

Münster, has contributed more than anyone else towards the awakening of Catholic theology during the post-war years. Kant's transcendental philosophy and Heidegger's existentialism are the backbones of his theological thinking. During the period under consideration he has made important original contributions to Christology<sup>23</sup>. His transcendental Christology is one 'from below,' but not in the sense that it starts *a posteriori* from the historical Jesus of Nazareth (Life-of-Jesus theologies had a sorry end, he knows well), but rather in the sense that it starts from *a priori* anthropological presuppositions which make Christology intelligible and relevant to modern man.

Transcendental analysis is not something special to Christology alone. It is the general approach of Rahner to all the problems of theology. It is then a method. According to him "theology today has to be theological anthropology, and such an anthropocentric orientation of theology is both necessary and fruitful"<sup>24</sup>.

23. K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations* V (1966), London, 1969, pp. 157-192; *Christology within an evolutionary view of the world* (1962); pp. 193-215; *Dogmatic Reflections on the knowledge and self-consciousness of Christ* (1961); *Jesus Christ* (1960), in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, V, pp. 953-961; *Geheimnisse des Lebens Jesu*, in: *Schriften zur Theologie*, VII, 1966, pp. 43-196; *Der eine Mittler und Vielfalt der Vermittlungen*, in: *Schriften* VIII, Zürich, 1967, pp. 218-235; *Gotteslehre und Christologie*, in: *Schriften*, IX, Zürich, 1970, pp. 161-196; *Ich glaube an Jesus Christus*, Zurich, 1968; *Soteriologie*, in *Sacramentum Mundi*, IV, Freiburg, 1969, pp. 590-596. (with others) *Jesus Christ*, in: *Sacramentum Mundi* II, Freiburg, 1968, pp. 900-957. His works before 1960 are also important: *Current Problems in Christology*, in: *Theological Investigations* I. (1954), London, 1965, pp. 149-201; *The eternal significance of the humanity of Jesus for our relationship with God*, (1953), in: *Theol. Investig.* III, London, 1967, pp. 35-46; *On the Theology of Incarnation*, (1958), in: *Theol. Investig.* IV, London, 1965, pp. 105-120; *Dogmatic Questions on Easter* (1959), *ibid.*, pp. 121-133.

24. *Theology and Anthropology*, in: *op. cit.* above, p. 1



What is then meant by transcendental analysis? "It asks about a thing from the point of view of the necessary conditions in the subject itself that make it possible for that thing to be known or done by the subject concerned"<sup>25</sup>; and in theology it means that "in every dogmatic question you examine you must seek to discover the conditions in man, the knowing subject, which make it possible for him to arrive at the knowledge of the matter in question"<sup>26</sup>.

Today Christology must be developed from the standpoint of such a transcendental anthropology<sup>27</sup>, if hypostatic union is to be clearly and sufficiently protected against the accusation of mythology<sup>28</sup>. What are the transcendental conditions in man for the understanding of Christology? Man has to be seen "as that being who has absolute transcendence towards God" "as the obediential potency for the hypostatic union"<sup>29</sup>.

From the evolutionary point of view, Rahner shows how the notion of self-transcendence (which includes also the transcendence into what is substantially new, i. e. a leap into a higher nature) is at the very heart of the phenomenon of 'becoming'<sup>30</sup>. Life is the self-transcendence of matter, and man is the self-transcendence of living matter. In spirit, in man, living matter arrives at its climax of evolution<sup>31</sup>. And the spirit? man?

25. *ibid.* p. 2; cfr. *Schriften*, IX, p. 98f.

26. *Theology and Anthropology*, in: *op. cit.* p. 3; cfr. *Schriften*, IX, 98

27. *Theol. and Anthropology*, p. 2

28. *Ibid.* p. 12

29. *Ibid.* p. 1; 3; cfr. *Schriften*, IX, p. 105.

30. *Theological Investigations*, V, p. 165

31. *Ibid.* p. 168.

Starting 'from above' we have to see God as absolute good, and as such, as '*diffusivum sui*' as love; self-giving or self-communicating love therefore belongs to the very essence of divine being. God gives himself to man, in grace and glory. This self-giving or self-communication is a process with varying intensities and has itself a history<sup>32</sup>, and reaches its climax only when God gives himself fully and irrevocably and finally to man; when it is given to man to experience the radical and irrevocable and final immediacy to God; only when God becomes one with man.

From the above-said two starting-points the idea of incarnation becomes understandable. The incarnation, when seen 'from above' is the climax of the self-giving of God; and 'from below' it is the climax of human self-transcendence<sup>33</sup>. "In the human reality of Jesus God's self-communication to us is simply, absolutely and irrevocably present; in it is present both the declaration made to us and its acceptance<sup>34</sup>.

### A. Hulsbosch

The Dutch Augustinian, A. Hulsbosch, is one of the best known theologians of Holland. His contribution to Christology: *Jesus Christus, gekend als mens, beleden als zoon Gods* (1966)<sup>35</sup>, starts from the epistemological pre-supposition that God is not accessible apart from his created manifestations (p. 259).

The history of Christology, he says, has been a

32. *Schriften*, IX, p. 106

33. *Theol. Investig.* V, p. 176

34. *Ibid.* p. 183f. cfr. pp. 175f. 180, 172f.

35. (Jesus Christ known as man and confessed as Son of God), in: *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 6 (1966), pp. 250-273, to which page references are made.

continual search after the unity of that person, who is known to us as a man and whom we confess as the Son of God. The Church found a solution to the Christological problematique in the Chalcedonian two-natures theory. But according to him this theory is dualistic and static in character, and cannot explain the difference between the heavenly and historical existence of Jesus, nor the human development of Jesus (p. 254).

Hulsbosch tries a new interpretation of the Christological dogma from the evolutionary point of view: Just as the living being is not just matter plus life, but rather living matter, and man, not just matter plus spirit, but rather spiritual matter (p. 253), so also Jesus is not just man plus divine, but rather divine-man. Thus Jesus is a man who exists on a higher level, endowed with special grace. But Hulsbosch will not consider Jesus as the only Son united with the Father in the divine nature (p. 254). At the same time, for him, Christ is nothing as man, in so far as he is the full manifestation of God (p. 257), and his divine worth comes from the fact that he manifests the Father. Because in his human subjectivity he is God, he can be said to be pre-existent; but this pre-existence is nothing other than "the retro-projected subjectivity of the man Jesus into his divine sonship" (p. 266).

### Edward H. Schillebeeckx

Though Schillebeeckx, the world-famous Dutch theologian, in his critical review<sup>36</sup> of Hulsbosch's

36. *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 6 (1966) pp. 274-288, to which page references are made; cfr. also his articles: *Het Bewustzijnsleven van Christus*, (The conscious life of Christ) in: *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* (1961) pp. 227-251; *De zin van het menszijn van Jesus de Christus*, (The Meaning of the humanity of Jesus, the Christ) in: *TVT* 2 (1962) pp. 127-172; *Theological Soundings*, 1/2, London, 1960.

position does not accept the view of dualism in the Chalcedonian formula or of the inaccessibility of God outside his created manifestation (because, he says, the human world of experience cannot be conceived of as a closed horizon), still he maintains that "the form in which God reveals himself is the man, Jesus; the divinity reveals itself in the humanity of Jesus" (p. 276); and that Jesus "is the Son of the Father and reveals the Father in human sonship. This sonship does not therefore lie outside this man" (p. 283).

Jesus' humanity is personal, though not a human person<sup>37</sup>. The Son himself is personally man, and the man Jesus is personally God the Son. A human act of Jesus' is therefore a personal act of God appearing in human form<sup>38</sup>, because his humanity is the humanity of God Himself and in this sense, unique (p. 283). As true humanity is not possible without consciousness of self, Christ, since he was truly man, has a human consciousness<sup>39</sup>; but the centre of his human consciousness is the Father: "If all speaking on the part of one man to his fellow man is a revelation of himself, this means as far as Christ is concerned, that all his human speaking and all his human activity is, by definition, a revelation of the Father and a pouring out of the pneuma"<sup>40</sup>

### Piet Schoonenberg

The Christology of Piet Schoonenberg, Professor at Nijmegen, is influenced by the thought of O. Cullmann, John A. T. Robinson, and E. Schillebeeckx' opinion regarding the human consciousness of

37. *Theological Soundings* p. 123.

38. *Ibid*

39. *Ibid.* p. 124

40. *Ibid.*



Jesus. He is critical of the Chalcedonian formula, because by stressing the word 'unconfused', it treats of the two natures of Christ as if they are juxtaposed, and because it, so to say, de-personalises the man Jesus and thus strikes a sorry balance between monophysitism and antiochenism<sup>41</sup>.

Schoonenberg's Christology starts from the fact that Jesus is one person. For, when we say 'Jesus' or 'Christ' we know (and the New Testament also knows) who is meant (p. 70f). Secondly, Jesus is really a man (p. 76) with his own self-consciousness, freedom and centre of activity (p. 78) For God's revelation in the man Jesus does not do violence to his human personality, but only perfects it: God's action (grace/revelation) does not destroy human nature, but only perfects it (p. 78; 102). Thirdly, he is God's Son or Word. All the titles of Christ could be reduced to one: Son of God; and he is such not only in this earthly life, but also in his pre-history (p. 91). But this does not mean that the Word of God was 'personal' before incarnation<sup>42</sup>; for, before the incarnation the Word of God had everything in common with the Father; and a person, according to Schoonenberg, is that being who has his own proper freedom and consciousness<sup>43</sup>. Further, the personal pre-existence of the Word within the divinity is not a direct object of scriptural

41. *Ein Gott der Menschen* (A God of men) (1969), Benziger, 1970, to which page references are made in the text: his other works: *Over de God-mens* (About the God-man), in: *Bijdragen* 25 (1964) 166-187; *De eenheid van Christus en de preexistentie van de zoon* (The unity of Christ and the pre-existence of the Son), *Jaarboek* (1963/64), pp. 92-119; *Kenosis*, in: *Concilium* 2 (1966) pp. 27-30; *Christus zonder Tweeheid* (Christ without duality) in: *TVT* 6 (1966) pp. 289-306.

42. *Concilium*, p. 32; cfr. *TVT*, 1966, p. 296; *Bijdragen*, p. 185.

43. *Bijdragen*, p. 185.

proclamation<sup>44</sup>. So we must complete the Chalcedonian formula by saying that "Christ is fully God and fully man, he is fully divine person and at the same time fully human person" (p. 92); for God's presence in him is not partial, but complete; it permeates the human personality of Jesus in such way that his human personality becomes the personality of God: God's word became personality in him (94ff).

Christ's human person is transcendent and eschatological in the sense that "in the salvation history he is the final full Word of God... Christ is the fulfilment; he is the one who has achieved this self-fulfilment" (p.104). God's reality is fully in him and reveals itself in him as love (p. 193); and the speciality of this love is that it does not know any limit (p. 108). Thus Christ is the God of men among men: "It is as a God of men that we experience God in Israel and in Jesus Christ" (p. 194)

### Hans Küng

Küng of Tübingen University is famous for his courage or audacity in putting his finger upon the hottest of Church problems<sup>45</sup>, and is known mostly as a practical theologian. But in his recent works<sup>46</sup> he develops a theological style which he calls "meta-dogmatic" (a term introduced by his pupil Josef Nolte) by which he means nothing un dogmatic or anti-dogmatic, but only a shift of emphasis and point of view (p. 599)

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44. *Concilium* p. 31

45. For example, his latest work: *Infallible: An Inquiry*, (1970), Doubleday, 1971.

46. *The Church* (1967), Burns and Oates, 1970; *Menschwerdung Gottes*, (Incarnation of God) Herder, 1970, to which are the page references made.

Küng's Christology is based upon two pre-suppositions: one, the historicity of God, for which he depends heavily on Hegel's idea of the 'becoming' and the 'passion' of God, and the other, the historicity of Jesus, which means the observation of the concrete living Jesus of Nazareth as witnessed by the Bible (p. 598).

For him the point of contact with Hegelian philosophy for a Christological interpretation is the very point which was once the object of theological criticism, namely the identification of God and man in the absolute spirit, the idea of the 'becoming' and 'passion' of God in the world (p. 523f.). These are concepts central to Christology. The living God for Hegel is the one who moves, changes, and lives through history. He does not remain just what he is, but becomes what he is. He does not remain in himself above the world, but rather goes out of himself, manifests himself, through the becoming of the world, which has its climax in the incarnation of God himself. This is the real Christian God, the God who is God and man in unity (p. 526).

On the other hand Christology has to begin with Jesus, his preaching, his death and resurrection as well as with what the disciples preached of him. None of these elements could be left out, if Christology is to be complete. In the historical perspective we have to take into account the following things: The preaching of Jesus (in its continuity and discontinuity with the preaching of the primitive Church) (p. 600ff); the conduct of Jesus only against this background can we really understand the preaching of Jesus (p. 602f; his destiny (the tragedy which became his through his preaching and conduct; and finally, the meaning of Jesus for us today. Though we do not know the exact reality behind the easter experience, still this could be said Jesus the crucified lives, and he is experienced as the living one (p. 604), and the titles of Christ were used by the primitive Church to express their faith in this



living Jesus, to express what Christ meant for them. Hence we have to discover what these titles actually mean and try to express them in concepts intelligible to us today (p. 608f). For, it is not these titles that gave Jesus his authority, but is he who gave them their meaning (p. 609). He remains for us too the meaning of our life, because in him is revealed the humanity of our God and the real humanity of man (p. 610).

### To conclude

We might conclude this survey of literature with the observation made by Yves Congar in his recent book: *Jésus Christ, notre Médiateur, notre Seigneur* (1965)<sup>47</sup>. He says, if the modern world, which is centred wholly upon man as its climax, has developed a purely human and earthly and non-theological humanism and 'philanthropy,' it is perhaps because we have described our God as one without 'human-friendliness,' because we have tried to build up a theology without anthropology, a first commandment with the second. So the solution to the *problématique* lies in our returning to the living God of the faith and of the Bible, in our recognising and proclaiming "the 'true' God, whose last name is Jesus Christ" (p. 35ff).

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C. Thundiyil

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47. Paris, Edition du Cerf.



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